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# *Readings in Anthropology*

VOLUME II CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

ALSO BY MORTON H. FRIED

*Fabric of Chinese Society*

*The Evolution of Political Society*

# *Readings in Anthropology*

SECOND EDITION



Morton H. Fried

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Volume II *Cultural Anthropology*



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# Preface

THIS VOLUME contains 51 articles devoted to various aspects of cultural anthropology. They define the subject and present concrete examples of the work which is carried out, both descriptive and analytical, in the field and in the analysis of the structure and content of culture. This book is the continuation of Volume I—*Readings in Anthropology: Physical Anthropology, Linguistics, and Archeology*.

The selections are uneven. They differ in degree of detail, in complexity of analysis, in the facility of their authors' pens. Some guide to the main point or points made in each article will be found in the editor's statement which precedes it. Those who read this book in conjunction with a course in anthropology will be guided by their instructor. A few technical remarks, however, may make the reading of this book easier and more enjoyable.

Though the articles proceed in an order sensible to the editor, many other alternative organizations are possible and one does not have to examine the materials sequentially. A certain amount of cross-referencing has been done in the prefatory statements. References are, for example, to II:32—meaning selection No. 32 in this volume, which is the second of two. Articles in the first volume are referred to, for example, as I:1, etc.

A table will be found at the end of this book showing the correspondence between the selections in these pages and the organization of the presently available textbooks in anthropology. In the contest between the desire to include as many selections as possible and the obvious limitations of space, one important compromise was made: the extensive footnoting, particularly bibliographical, of most of these articles was deleted. Students who wish to pursue a subject further are urged to look up the original selection and examine its bibliography.

The editor would also like to add to the list of those whose assistance helped produce this book the names of Thomas Simpson and Bat'ya Knapp of the Thomas Y. Crowell Company.



# Introductory Note

WITH LINGUISTICS and archeology treated in the first volume as aspects of cultural anthropology, the subtitle of this volume may appear redundant and confusing. The use of the phrase "cultural anthropology" to designate the study of culture exclusive of archeological and linguistic specializations is conventional in the United States, and for this reason it appears above. Elsewhere, as in Great Britain, the phrase is steadfastly avoided, "social anthropology" being preferred. The two fields thus delimited are generally congruent, but their distinct names reflect a significant difference in their contents if not their methods. To some extent the difference is reminiscent of (but basically unlike) the distinction between cultural anthropology and sociology. Briefly, where cultural anthropology retains a very broad view, studying social organization in larger cultural contexts, social anthropology tends to concentrate on the structure and functioning of particular human societies with a consequent de-emphasis of other aspects of culture.

The breadth of view of American cultural anthropology has encouraged the development of various new types of research, some requiring skills developed in other disciplines. Community studies borrow heavily from sociology and culture-personality research leans upon psychological and psychiatric methods.

Though it is sometimes said that anthropological interest in modern complex societies is a recent development, both Tylor and Morgan, not to mention other outstanding nineteenth-century anthropologists, had vital interests in the complex societies of their time. It is true, however, that whereas nineteenth-century sociology concentrated on European society, the contemporary anthropology was largely devoted to studies of aboriginal cultures and speculation about the evolution of culture.

The shrinking of the globe through revolutions in transpor-

tation also threatened to extinguish ethnography, the study of particular cultures, since fewer and fewer cultures remained untouched by trade, money or machinery. One of the first reactions of the ethnographers was to concentrate on the old people; working intensively with them it was possible to recall and record something of those cultures which a generation before had been thriving and now were altered and feeble. Soon, however, it was realized that the meeting of two cultures with subsequent changes in one or both was itself a most important thing to study. With acculturation studies also came research in non-primitive communities—plantations, peasant villages, Chinese towns, and Yankee industrial cities. Regardless of changes in the theory or methods of cultural (and social) anthropology, fieldwork remains the main source of data and a prime requirement in the developing careers of fledgling anthropologists.

After a classic selection (II:1) defining culture, the next selections consider problems in the interaction between man and culture (II:2, 3, 4). This takes us into methodology. Reversing an alternatively possible sequence, we consider first some questions pertaining mainly to the analysis of data (II:5, 6, 7); these questions also raise philosophical problems concerning the obtaining of data, and then we confront directly the problem of fieldwork.

Next, the volume turns to consideration of the interaction between culture and its environment, broadly conceived. This involves us in the ecological approach (II:10, 11, 12), and the next step is into economic anthropology (II:13, 14, 15).

Befitting the central role of the study of social organization in cultural anthropology, the largest group of articles under a single heading is devoted to this subject (II:16-28), although the range covered is great, spanning simple to state societies; family, lineage, clan, kindred and nation; and kinship, law, and political organization. The study of complex and changing societies is then turned to in greater detail (II:29-36). Attention is paid to a variety of topics, including urban and applied anthropology.

Returning to a more topical approach, the volume includes various selections devoted to religion or, more broadly, to the wide realm of ideology (II:37-41), the arts (II:42-46), and to psychological anthropology (II:47-49). The book then raises some of the contemporary ethical problems which plague most anthropologists and concludes with a brief word about anthropology as a profession for those whose interest has been roused to a dangerous level. Some students even become anthropologists!

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# 1 The Science of Culture



Edward Burnett Tylor

AT THE HEART OF ANTHROPOLOGY LIES MAN—AND SOMETHING MORE. THAT *which is more is usually known as culture. It is the concept that enables us to bridge such diverse fields as human paleontology, medical anthropology, linguistics, archeology, the study of society, to mention only a few. Twenty-eight pages of Kroeber and Kluckhohn's Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions (1952) are devoted to a partial listing of definitions proposed for culture. Notable is those authors' statement that the basic anthropological meaning of the word is that given by Tylor in 1871 in the very chapter which follows this headnote.*

*Common to most anthropological definitions of culture, although sometimes by implication, is the notion that it includes all symbolically learned patterns of behavior. In establishing the anthropological meaning of culture, Tylor took his place with those who insist that human behavior is a kind of natural phenomenon, caused and regular, capable of being subjected to objective study and scientific analysis with the hope of the ultimate discovery or the formulation of laws of cultural process and*

SOURCE: Chapter 1 of *Primitive Culture* (London: John Murray & Co., 1871, 2 vols.), pp. 1-25. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

Sir Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917) held the first chair of anthropology established at the University of Oxford. While his experience of exotic cultures was limited to a visit to Mexico (1856) and later (1884) to the southwestern United States, where he visited Pueblo Indians, he had an experimental, research view of anthropology which is manifest in his writings. His contributions to anthropology are numerous and varied, ranging from specific studies in the diffusion of traits to a theory of the origin of religion. Among his books are *Researches into the Early History of Mankind* (1865), *Primitive Culture* (1871) and *Anthropology* (1881).

evolution. Tylor himself raises the question of free will in the context of cultural determinism and several other selections in the Readings (particularly 11:2, 3 and 4) debate the problem.

*The contemporary reader of Tylor's essay may be puzzled about the emphasis he finds placed upon rebuttal of the "degeneration theory." Yet barely a century ago even many educated intellectuals believed primitive cultures the result of a fall from previously higher levels of civilization, essentially though not exclusively a biblically derived error. Tylor asserts positively the importance of "survivals," traits retained and still functioning although derived from earlier cultures or cultural stages. Survivals for Tylor became a major artifact of method. By comparing contemporary cultures and by comparing an existing culture with its own historical forebears, he attempted to construct a picture of regularities in the evolution of culture per se. This, then, is something of Tylor's view of the science of culture, to which you are now introduced.*

Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. The condition of culture among the various societies of mankind, in so far as it is capable of being investigated on general principles, is a subject apt for the study of laws of human thought and action. On the one hand, the uniformity which so largely pervades civilization may be ascribed, in great measure, to the uniform action of uniform causes: while on the other hand its various grades may be regarded as stages of development or evolution, each the outcome of previous history, and about to do its proper part in shaping the history of the future. To the investigation of these two great principles in several departments of ethnography, with especial consideration of the civilization of the lower tribes as related to the civilization of the higher nations, the present volumes are devoted.

Our modern investigators in the sciences of inorganic nature are foremost to recognize, both within and without their special fields of work, the unity of nature, the fixity of its laws, the definite sequence of cause and effect through which every fact depends on what has gone before it, and acts upon what is to come after it. They grasp firmly the Pythagorean doctrine of pervading order in the universal Kosmos. They affirm, with Aristotle, that nature is not full of incoherent episodes, like a bad tragedy. They agree with Leibnitz in what he calls 'my axiom, that nature never acts by leaps (la nature n'agit jamais par saut),' as well as in his 'great principle, commonly little employed, that nothing happens without sufficient reason.' Nor again, in studying the structure and habits of plants and animals, or in investigating the lower functions even of man, are these leading ideas unacknowledged. But when we come to

talk of the higher processes of human feeling and action, of thought and language, knowledge and art, a change appears in the prevalent tone of opinion. The world at large is scarcely prepared to accept the general study of human life as a branch of natural science, and to carry out, in a large sense, the poet's injunction to 'Account for moral as for natural things.' To many educated minds there seems something presumptuous and repulsive in the view that the history of mankind is part and parcel of the history of nature, that our thoughts, wills, and actions accord with laws as definite as those which govern the motion of waves, the combination of acids and bases, and the growth of plants and animals.

The main reasons of this state of the popular judgment are not far to seek. There are many who would willingly accept a science of history if placed before them with substantial definiteness of principle and evidence, but who not unreasonably reject the systems offered to them, as falling too far short of a scientific standard. Through resistance such as this, real knowledge always sooner or later makes its way, while the habit of opposition to novelty does such excellent service against the invasions of speculative dogmatism, that we may sometimes even wish it were stronger than it is. But other obstacles to the investigation of laws of human nature arise from considerations of metaphysics and theology. The popular notion of free human will involves not only freedom to act in accordance with motive, but also a power of breaking loose from continuity and acting without cause,—a combination which may be roughly illustrated by the simile of a balance sometimes acting in the usual way, but also possessed of the faculty of turning by itself without or against its weights. This view of an anomalous action of the will, which it need hardly be said is incompatible with scientific argument, subsists as an opinion patent or latent in men's minds, and strongly affecting their theoretic views of history, though it is not, as a rule, brought prominently forward in systematic reasoning. Indeed the definition of human will, as strictly according with motive, is the only possible scientific basis in such enquiries. Happily, it is not needful to add here yet another to the list of dissertations on supernatural intervention and natural causation, on liberty, predestination, and accountability. We may hasten to escape from the regions of transcendental philosophy and theology, to start on a more hopeful journey over more practicable ground. None will deny that, as each man knows by the evidence of his own consciousness, definite and natural cause does, to a great extent, determine human action. Then, keeping aside from considerations of extra-natural interference and causeless spontaneity, let us take this admitted existence of natural cause and effect as our standing-ground, and travel on it so far as it will bear us. It is on this same basis that physical science pursues, with ever-increasing success, its quest of laws of nature. Nor need this restriction hamper the scientific study of human life, in which the real difficulties

are the practical ones of enormous complexity of evidence, and imperfection of methods of observation.

Now it appears that this view of human will and conduct as subject to definite law, is indeed recognised and acted upon by the very people who oppose it when stated in the abstract as a general principle, and who then complain that it annihilates man's free will, destroys his sense of personal responsibility, and degrades him to a soulless machine. He who will say these things will nevertheless pass much of his own life in studying the motives which lead to human action, seeking to attain his wishes through them, framing in his mind theories of personal character, reckoning what are likely to be the effects of new combinations, and giving to his reasoning the crowning character of true scientific enquiry, by taking it for granted that in so far as his calculation turns out wrong, either his evidence must have been false or incomplete, or his judgment upon it unsound. Such a one will sum up the experience of years spent in complex relations with society, by declaring his persuasion that there is a reason for everything in life, and that where events look unaccountable, the rule is to wait and watch in hope that the key to the problem may some day be found. This man's observation may have been as narrow as his inferences are crude and prejudiced, but nevertheless he has been an inductive philosopher 'more than forty years without knowing it.' He has practically acknowledged definite laws of human thought and action, and has simply thrown out of account in his own studies of life the whole fabric of motiveless will and uncaused spontaneity. It is assumed here that they should be just so thrown out of account in wider studies, and that the true philosophy of history lies in extending and improving the methods of the plain people who form their judgments upon facts, and check them upon new facts. Whether the doctrine be wholly or but partly true, it accepts the very condition under which we search for new knowledge in the lessons of experience, and in a word the whole course of our rational life is based upon it.

'One event is always the son of another, and we must never forget the parentage,' was a remark made by a Bechuana chief to Casalis the African missionary. Thus at all times historians, so far as they have aimed at being more than mere chroniclers, have done their best to show not merely succession, but connexion, among the events upon their record. Moreover, they have striven to elicit general principles of human action, and by these to explain particular events, stating expressly or taking tacitly for granted the existence of a philosophy of history. Should any one deny the possibility of thus establishing historical laws, the answer is ready with which Boswell in such a case turned on Johnson: 'Then, sir, you would reduce all history to no better than an almanack.' That nevertheless the labours of so many eminent thinkers should have as yet brought history only to the threshold of science, need cause no wonder

to those who consider the bewildering complexity of the problems which come before the general historian. The evidence from which he is to draw his conclusions is at once so multifarious and so doubtful, that a full and distinct view of its bearing on a particular question is hardly to be attained, and thus the temptation becomes all but irresistible to garble it in support of some rough and ready theory of the course of events. The philosophy of history at large, explaining the past and predicting the future phenomena of man's life in the world by reference to general laws, is in fact a subject with which, in the present state of knowledge, even genius aided by wide research seems but hardly able to cope. Yet there are departments of it which, though difficult enough, seem comparatively accessible. If the field of enquiry be narrowed from History as a whole to that branch of it which is here called Culture, the history, not of tribes or nations, but of the condition of knowledge, religion, art, custom, and the like among them, the task of investigation proves to lie within far more moderate compass. We suffer still from the same kind of difficulties which beset the wider argument, but they are much diminished. The evidence is no longer so wildly heterogeneous, but may be more simply classified and compared, while the power of getting rid of extraneous matter, and treating each issue on its own proper set of facts, makes close reasoning on the whole more available than in general history. This may appear from a brief preliminary examination of the problem, how the phenomena of Culture may be classified and arranged, stage by stage, in a probable order of evolution.

Surveyed in a broad view, the character and habit of mankind at once display that similarity and consistency of phenomena which led the Italian proverb-maker to declare that 'all the world is one country,' 'tutto il mondo è paese.' To general likeness in human nature on the one hand, and to general likeness in the circumstances of life on the other, this similarity and consistency may no doubt be traced, and they may be studied with especial fitness in comparing races near the same grade of civilization. Little respect need be had in such comparisons for date in history or for place on the map; the ancient Swiss lake-dweller may be set beside the mediæval Aztec, and the Ojibwa of North America beside the Zulu of South Africa. As Dr. Johnson contemptuously said when he had read about Patagonians and South Sea Islanders in Hawkesworth's *Voyages*, 'one set of savages is like another.' How true a generalization this really is, any Ethnological Museum may show. Examine for instance the edged and pointed instruments in such a collection; the inventory includes hatchet, adze, chisel, knife, saw, scraper, awl, needle, spear and arrow-head, and of these most or all belong with only differences of detail to races the most various. So it is with savage occupations; the wood-chopping, fishing with net and line, shooting and spearing game, fire-making, cooking, twisting cord and plaiting baskets, repeat themselves

with wonderful uniformity in the museum shelves which illustrate the life of the lower races from Kamchatka to Tierra del Fuego, and from Dahome to Hawaii. Even when it comes to comparing barbarous hordes with civilized nations, the consideration thrusts itself upon our minds, how far item after item of the life of the lower races passes into analogous proceedings of the higher, in forms not too far changed to be recognized, and sometimes hardly changed at all. Look at the modern European peasant using his hatchet and his hoe, see his food boiling or roasting over the log-fire, observe the exact place which beer holds in his calculation of happiness, hear his tale of the ghost in the nearest haunted house, and of the farmer's niece who was bewitched with knots in her inside till she fell into fits and died. If we choose out in this way things which have altered little in a long course of centuries, we may draw a picture where there shall be scarce a hand's breadth difference between an English ploughman and a negro of Central Africa. These pages will be so crowded with evidence of such correspondence among mankind, that there is no need to dwell upon its details here, but it may be used at once to override a problem which would complicate the argument, namely, the question of race. For the present purpose it appears both possible and desirable to eliminate considerations of hereditary varieties or races of man, and to treat mankind as homogeneous in nature, though placed in different grades of civilization. The details of the enquiry will, I think, prove that stages of culture may be compared without taking into account how far tribes who use the same implement, follow the same custom, or believe the same myth, may differ in their bodily configuration and the colour of their skin and hair.

A first step in the study of civilization is to dissect it into details, and to classify these in their proper groups. Thus, in examining weapons, they are to be classed under spear, club, sling, bow and arrow, and so forth; among textile arts are to be ranged matting, netting, and several grades of making and weaving threads; myths are divided under such headings as myths of sunrise and sunset, eclipse-myths, earthquake-myths, local myths which account for the names of places by some fanciful tale, eponymic myths which account for the parentage of a tribe by turning its name into the name of an imaginary ancestor; under rites and ceremonies occur such practices as the various kinds of sacrifice to the ghosts of the dead and to other spiritual beings, the turning to the east in worship, the purification of ceremonial or moral uncleanness by means of water or fire. Such are a few miscellaneous examples from a list of hundreds, and the ethnographer's business is to classify such details with a view to making out their distribution in geography and history, and the relations which exist among them. What this task is like, may be almost perfectly illustrated by comparing these details of culture with the species of plants and animals as studied by the naturalist. To the ethnographer the bow and

arrow is a species, the habit of flattening children's skulls is a species, the practice of reckoning numbers by tens is a species. The geographical distribution of these things, and their transmission from region to region, have to be studied as the naturalist studies the geography of his botanical and zoological species. Just as certain plants and animals are peculiar to certain districts, so it is with such instruments as the Australian boomerang, the Polynesian stick-and-groove for fire-making, the tiny bow and arrow used as a lancet or phlebotomy by tribes about the Isthmus of Panama, and in like manner with many an art, myth, or custom, found isolated in a particular field. Just as the catalogue of all the species of plants and animals of a district represents its Flora and Fauna, so the list of all the items of the general life of a people represents that whole which we call its culture. And just as distant regions so often produce vegetables and animals which are analogous, though by no means identical, so it is with the details of the civilization of their inhabitants. How good a working analogy there really is between the diffusion of plants and animals and the diffusion of civilization, comes well into view when we notice how far the same causes have produced both at once. In district after district, the same causes which have introduced the cultivated plants and domesticated animals of civilization, have brought in with them a corresponding art and knowledge. The course of events which carried horses and wheat to America carried with them the use of the gun and the iron hatchet, while in return the whole world received not only maize, potatoes, and turkeys, but the habit of tobacco-smoking and the sailor's hammock.

It is a matter worthy of consideration, that the accounts of similar phenomena of culture, recurring in different parts of the world, actually supply incidental proof of their own authenticity. Some years since, a question which brings out this point was put to me by a great historian—"How can a statement as to customs, myths, beliefs, &c., of a savage tribe be treated as evidence where it depends on the testimony of some traveller or missionary, who may be a superficial observer, more or less ignorant of the native language, a careless retailer of unsifted talk, a man prejudiced or even wilfully deceitful?" This question is, indeed, one which every ethnographer ought to keep clearly and constantly before his mind. Of course he is bound to use his best judgment as to the trustworthiness of all authors he quotes, and if possible to obtain several accounts to certify each point in each locality. But it is over and above these measures of precaution that the test of recurrence comes in. If two independent visitors to different countries, say a mediæval Mohammedan in Tartary and a modern Englishman in Dahome, or a Jesuit missionary in Brazil and a Wesleyan in the Fiji Islands, agree in describing some analogous art or rite or myth among the people they have visited, it becomes difficult or impossible to set down such correspondence to accident or wilful fraud. A story by a bushranger in Australia may, perhaps, be



objected to as a mistake or an invention, but did a Methodist minister in Guinea conspire with him to cheat the public by telling the same story there? The possibility of intentional or unintentional mystification is often barred by such a state of things as that a similar statement is made in two remote lands, by two witnesses, of whom A lived a century before B, and B appears never to have heard of A. How distant are the countries, how wide apart the dates, how different the creeds and characters of the observers, in the catalogue of facts of civilization, needs no farther showing to any one who will even glance at the footnotes of the present work. And the more odd the statement, the less likely that several people in several places should have made it wrongly. This being so, it seems reasonable to judge that the statements are in the main truly given, and that their close and regular coincidence is due to the cropping up of similar facts in various districts of culture. Now the most important facts of ethnography are vouched for in this way. Experience leads the student after a while to expect and find that the phenomena of culture, as resulting from widely-acting similar causes, should recur again and again in the world. He even mistrusts isolated statements to which he knows of no parallel elsewhere, and waits for their genuineness to be shown by corresponding accounts from the other side of the earth, or the other end of history. So strong, indeed, is this means of authentication, that the ethnographer in his library may sometimes presume to decide, not only whether a particular explorer is a shrewd, honest observer, but also whether what he reports is conformable to the general rules of civilization. 'Non quis, sed quid.'

To turn from the distribution of culture in different countries, to its diffusion within these countries. The quality of mankind which tends most to make the systematic study of civilization possible, is that remarkable tacit consensus or agreement which so far induces whole populations to unite in the use of the same language, to follow the same religion and customary law, to settle down to the same general level of art and knowledge. It is this state of things which makes it so far possible to ignore exceptional facts and to describe nations by a sort of general average. It is this state of things which makes it so far possible to represent immense masses of details by a few typical facts, while, these once settled, new cases recorded by new observers simply fall into their places to prove the soundness of the classification. There is found to be such regularity in the composition of societies of men, that we can drop individual differences out of sight, and thus can generalize on the arts and opinions of whole nations, just as, when looking down upon an army from a hill, we forget the individual soldier, whom, in fact, we can scarce distinguish in the mass, while we see each regiment as an organized body, spreading or concentrating, moving in advance or in retreat. In some branches of the study of social laws it is now possible to call in the aid

of statistics, and to set apart special actions of large mixed communities of men by means of taxgatherers' schedules, or the tables of the insurance office. Among modern arguments on the laws of human action, none have had a deeper effect than generalizations such as those of M. Quetelet, on the regularity, not only of such matters as average stature and the annual rates of birth and death, but of the recurrence, year after year, of such obscure and seemingly incalculable products of national life as the numbers of murders and suicides, and the proportion of the very weapons of crime. Other striking cases are the annual regularity of persons killed accidentally in the London streets, and of undirected letters dropped into post-office letter-boxes. But in examining the culture of the lower races, far from having at command the measured arithmetical facts of modern statistics, we may have to judge of the condition of tribes from the imperfect accounts supplied by travellers or missionaries, or even to reason upon relics of prehistoric races of whose very names and languages we are hopelessly ignorant. Now these may seem at the first glance sadly indefinite and unpromising materials for scientific enquiry. But in fact they are neither indefinite nor unpromising, but give evidence that is good and definite so far as it goes. They are data which, for the distinct way in which they severally denote the condition of the tribe they belong to, will actually bear comparison with the statistician's returns. The fact is that a stone arrow-head, a carved club, an idol, a gravemound where slaves and property have been buried for the use of the dead, an account of a sorcerer's rites in making rain, a table of numerals, the conjugation of a verb, are things which each express the state of a people as to one particular point of culture, as truly as the tabulated numbers of deaths by poison, and of chests of tea imported, express in a different way other partial results of the general life of a whole community.

That a whole nation should have a special dress, special tools and weapons, special laws of marriage and property, special moral and religious doctrines, is a remarkable fact, which we notice so little because we have lived all our lives in the midst of it. It is with such general qualities of organized bodies of men that ethnography has especially to deal. Yet, while generalizing on the culture of a tribe or nation, and setting aside the peculiarities of the individuals composing it as unimportant to the main result, we must be careful not to forget what makes up this main result. There are people so intent on the separate life of individuals that they cannot grasp a notion of the action of a community as a whole—such an observer, incapable of a wide view of society, is aptly described in the saying that he 'cannot see the forest for the trees.' But, on the other hand, the philosopher may be so intent upon his general laws of society as to neglect the individual actors of whom that society is made up, and of him it may be said that he cannot see the trees for the forest. We know how arts, customs, and ideas are shaped among ourselves

by the combined actions of many individuals, of which actions both motive and effect often come quite distinctly within our view. The history of an invention, an opinion, a ceremony, is a history of suggestion and modification, encouragement and opposition, personal gain and party prejudice, and the individuals concerned act each according to his own motives, as determined by his character and circumstances. Thus sometimes we watch individuals acting for their own ends with little thought of their effect on society at large, and sometimes we have to study movements of national life as a whole, where the individuals co-operating in them are utterly beyond our observation. But seeing that collective social action is the mere resultant of many individual actions, it is clear that these two methods of enquiry, if rightly followed, must be absolutely consistent.

In studying both the recurrence of special habits or ideas in several districts, and their prevalence within each district, there come before us ever-reiterated proofs of regular causation producing the phenomena of human life, and of laws of maintenance and diffusion according to which these phenomena settle into permanent standard conditions of society, at definite stages of culture. But, while giving full importance to the evidence bearing on these standard conditions of society, let us be careful to avoid a pitfall which may entrap the unwary student. Of course the opinions and habits belonging in common to masses of mankind are to a great extent the results of sound judgment and practical wisdom. But to a great extent it is not so. That many numerous societies of men should have believed in the influence of the evil eye and the existence of a firmament, should have sacrificed slaves and goods to the ghosts of the departed, should have handed down traditions of giants slaying monsters and men turning into beasts—all this is ground for holding that such ideas were indeed produced in men's minds by efficient causes, but it is not ground for holding that the rites in question are profitable, the beliefs sound, and the history authentic. This may seem at the first glance a truism, but, in fact, it is the denial of a fallacy which deeply affects the minds of all but a small critical minority of mankind. Popularly, what everybody says must be true, what everybody does must be right—'Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est, hoc est vere propriæque Catholicum'—and so forth. There are various topics, especially in history, law, philosophy, and theology, where even the educated people we live among can hardly be brought to see that the cause why men do hold an opinion, or practise a custom, is by no means necessarily a reason why they ought to do so. Now collections of ethnographic evidence bringing so prominently into view the agreement of immense multitudes of men as to certain traditions, beliefs, and usages, are peculiarly liable to be thus improperly used in direct defence of these institutions themselves, even old barbaric nations being polled to main-

tain their opinions against what are called modern ideas. As it has more than once happened to myself to find my collections of traditions and beliefs thus set up to prove their own objective truth, without proper examination of the grounds on which they were actually received, I take this occasion of remarking that the same line of argument will serve equally well to demonstrate, by the strong and wide consent of nations, that the earth is flat, and nightmare the visit of a demon.

It being shown that the details of Culture are capable of being classified in a great number of ethnographic groups of arts, beliefs, customs, and the rest, the consideration comes next how far the facts arranged in these groups are produced by evolution from one another. It need hardly be pointed out that the groups in question, though held together each by a common character, are by no means accurately defined. To take up again the natural history illustration, it may be said that they are species which tend to run widely into varieties. And when it comes to the question what relations some of these groups bear to others, it is plain that the student of the habits of mankind has a great advantage over the student of the species of plants and animals. Among naturalists it is an open question whether a theory of development from species to species is a record of transitions which actually took place, or a mere ideal scheme serviceable in the classification of species whose origin was really independent. But among ethnographers there is no such question as to the possibility of species of implements or habits or beliefs being developed one out of another, for development in Culture is recognized by our most familiar knowledge. Mechanical invention supplies apt examples of the kind of development which affects civilization at large. In the history of fire-arms, the clumsy wheel-lock, in which a notched steel wheel revolved by means of a spring against a piece of pyrites till a spark caught the priming, led to the invention of the more serviceable flint-lock, of which a few still hang in the kitchens of our farm-houses for the boys to shoot small birds with at Christmas; the flint-lock in time passed by modification into the percussion-lock, which is just now changing its oldfashioned arrangement to be adapted from muzzle-loading to breech-loading. The mediæval astrolabe passed into the quadrant, now discarded in its turn by the seaman, who uses the more delicate sextant, and so it is through the history of one art and instrument after another. Such examples of progression are known to us as direct history, but so thoroughly is this notion of development at home in our minds, that by means of it we reconstruct lost history without scruple, trusting to general knowledge of the principles of human thought and action as a guide in putting the facts in their proper order. Whether chronicle speaks or is silent on the point, no one comparing a long-bow and a cross-bow would doubt that the cross-bow was a development arising from the simpler instrument. So among the fire-drills for igniting by friction, it seems clear on the face

of the matter that the drill worked by a cord or bow is a later improvement on the clumsier primitive instrument twirled between the hands. That instructive class of specimens which antiquaries sometimes discover, bronze celts modelled on the heavy type of the stone hatchet, are scarcely explicable except as first steps in the transition from the Stone Age to the Bronze Age, to be followed soon by the next stage of progress, in which it is discovered that the new material is suited to a handier and less wasteful pattern. And thus, in the other branches of our history, there will come again and again into view series of facts which may be consistently arranged as having followed one another in a particular order of development, but which will hardly bear being turned round and made to follow in reversed order. Such for instance are the facts I have here brought forward in a chapter on the Art of Counting, which tend to prove that as to this point of culture at least, savage tribes reached their position by learning and not by unlearning, by elevation from a lower rather than by degradation from a higher state.

Among evidence aiding us to trace the course which the civilization of the world has actually followed, is that great class of facts to denote which I have found it convenient to introduce the term 'survivals.' These are processes, customs, opinions, and so forth, which have been carried on by force of habit into a new state of society different from that in which they had their original home, and they thus remain as proofs and examples of an older condition of culture out of which a newer has been evolved. Thus, I know an old Somersetshire woman whose hand-loom dates from the time before the introduction of the 'flying shuttle,' which new-fangled appliance she has never even learnt to use, and I have seen her throw her shuttle from hand to hand in true classic fashion; this old woman is not a century behind her times, but she is a case of survival. Such examples often lead us back to the habits of hundreds and even thousands of years ago. The ordeal of the Key and Bible, still in use, is a survival; the Midsummer bonfire is a survival; the Breton peasants' All Souls' supper for the spirits of the dead is a survival. The simple keeping up of ancient habits is only one part of the transition from old into new and changing times. The serious business of ancient society may be seen to sink into the sport of later generations, and its serious belief to linger on in nursery folklore, while superseded habits of old-world life may be modified into new-world forms still powerful for good and evil. Sometimes old thoughts and practices will burst out afresh, to the amazement of a world that thought them long since dead or dying; here survival passes into revival, as has lately happened in so remarkable a way in the history of modern spiritualism, a subject full of instruction from the ethnographer's point of view. The study of the principles of survival has, indeed, no small practical importance, for most of what we call superstition is included within

survival, and in this way lies open to the attack of its deadliest enemy, a reasonable explanation. Insignificant, moreover, as multitudes of the facts of survival are in themselves, their study is so effective for tracing the course of the historical development through which alone it is possible to understand their meaning, that it becomes a vital point of ethnographic research to gain the clearest possible insight into their nature. This importance must justify the detail here devoted to an examination of survival, on the evidence of such games, popular sayings, customs, superstitions and the like, as may serve well to bring into view the manner of its operation.

Progress, degradation, survival, revival, modification, are all modes of the connexion that binds together the complex network of civilization. It needs but a glance into the trivial details of our own daily life to set us thinking how far we are really its originators, and how far but the transmitters and modifiers of the results of long past ages. Looking round the rooms we live in, we may try here how far he who only knows his own time can be capable of rightly comprehending even that. Here is the 'honeysuckle' of Assyria, there the fleur-de-lis of Anjou, a cornice with a Greek border runs round the ceiling, the style of Louis XIV. and its parent the Renaissance share the looking-glass between them. Transformed, shifted, or mutilated, such elements of art still carry their history plainly stamped upon them; and if the history yet farther behind is less easy to read, we are not to say that because we cannot clearly discern it there is therefore no history there. It is thus even with the fashion of the clothes men wear. The ridiculous little tails of the German postilion's coat show of themselves how they came to dwindle to such absurd rudiments; but the English clergyman's bands no longer so convey their history to the eye, and look unaccountable enough till one has seen the intermediate stages through which they came down from the more serviceable wide collars, such as Milton wears in his portrait, and which gave their name to the 'band-box' they used to be kept in. In fact, the books of costume, showing how one garment grew or shrank by gradual stages and passed into another, illustrate with much force and clearness the nature of the change and growth, revival and decay, which go on from year to year in more important matters of life. In books again, we see each writer not for and by himself, but occupying his proper place in history; we look through each philosopher, mathematician, chemist, poet, into the background of his education,—through Leibnitz into Descartes, through Dalton into Priestley, through Milton into Homer. The study of language has, perhaps, done more than any other in removing from our view of human thought and action the ideas of chance and arbitrary invention, and in substituting for them a theory of development by the co-operation of individual men, through processes ever reasonable and intelligible where the facts are fully known.

Rudimentary as the science of culture still is, the symptoms are becoming very strong that even what seem its most spontaneous and motiveless phenomena will, nevertheless, be shown to come within the range of distinct cause and effect as certainly as the facts of mechanics. What would be popularly thought more indefinite and uncontrolled than the products of the imagination in myths and fables? Yet any systematic investigation of mythology, on the basis of a wide collection of evidence, will show plainly enough in such efforts of fancy at once a development from stage to stage, and a production of uniformity of result from uniformity of cause. Here, as elsewhere, causeless spontaneity is seen to recede farther and farther into shelter within the dark precincts of ignorance; like chance, that still holds its place among the vulgar as a real cause of events otherwise unaccountable, while to educated men it has long consciously meant nothing but this ignorance itself. It is only when men fail to see the line of connexion in events, that they are prone to fall upon the notions of arbitrary impulses, causeless freaks, chance and nonsense and indefinite unaccountability. If childish games, purposeless customs, absurd superstitions, are set down as spontaneous because no one can say exactly how they came to be, the assertion may remind us of the like effect that the eccentric habits of the wild rice-plant had on the philosophy of a Red Indian tribe, otherwise disposed to see in the harmony of nature the effects of one controlling personal will. The Great Spirit, said these Sioux theologians, made all things except the wild rice; but the wild rice came by chance.

'Man,' said Wilhelm von Humboldt, 'ever connects on from what lies at hand (*der Mensch knüpft immer an Vorhandenes an*).' The notion of the continuity of civilization contained in this maxim is no barren philosophic principle, but is at once made practical by the consideration that they who wish to understand their own lives ought to know the stages through which their opinions and habits have become what they are. Auguste Comte scarcely overstated the necessity of this study of development when he declared at the beginning of his 'Positive Philosophy' that 'no conception can be understood except through its history,' and his phrase will bear extension to culture at large. To expect to look modern life in the face and comprehend it by mere inspection, is a philosophy whose weakness can easily be tested. Imagine any one explaining the trivial saying, 'a little bird told me,' without knowing of the old belief in the language of birds and beasts, to which Dr. Dasent, in the introduction to the *Norse Tales*, so reasonably traces its origin. Attempts to explain by the light of reason things which want the light of history to show their meaning, may be instanced from Blackstone's *Commentaries*. To Blackstone's mind, the very right of the commoner to turn his beast out to graze on the common, finds its origin and explanation in the feudal system. 'For, when lords of manors granted out parcels of land to ten-

ants, for services either done or to be done, these tenants could not plough or manure the land without beasts; these beasts could not be sustained without pasture; and pasture could not be had but in the lord's wastes, and on the uninclosed fallow grounds of themselves and the other tenants. The law therefore annexed this right of common, as inseparably incident, to the grant of the lands; and this was the original of common appendant,' &c. Now though there is nothing irrational in this explanation, it does not agree at all with the Teutonic land-law which prevailed in England long before the Norman Conquest, and of which the remains have never wholly disappeared. In the old village-community even the arable land, lying in the great common fields which may still be traced in our country, had not yet passed into separate property, while the pasturage in the fallows and stubbles and on the waste belonged to the householders in common. Since those days, the change from communal to individual ownership has mostly transformed this old-world system, but the right which the peasant enjoys of pasturing his cattle on the common still remains, not as a concession to feudal tenants, but as possessed by the commoners before the lord ever claimed the ownership of the waste. It is always unsafe to detach a custom from its hold on past events, treating it as an isolated fact to be simply disposed of by some plausible explanation.

In carrying on the great task of rational ethnography, the investigation of the causes which have produced the phenomena of culture, and of the laws to which they are subordinate, it is desirable to work out as systematically as possible a scheme of evolution of this culture along its many lines. In the following chapter, on the Development of Culture, an attempt is made to sketch a theoretical course of civilization among mankind, such as appears on the whole most accordant with the evidence. By comparing the various stages of civilization among races known to history, with the aid of archaeological inference from the remains of prehistoric tribes, it seems possible to judge in a rough way of an early general condition of man, which from our point of view is to be regarded as a primitive condition, whatever yet earlier state may in reality have lain behind it. This hypothetical primitive condition corresponds in a considerable degree to that of modern savage tribes, who, in spite of their difference and distance, have in common certain elements of civilization, which seem remains of an early state of the human race at large. If this hypothesis be true, then, notwithstanding the continual interference of degeneration, the main tendency of culture from primæval up to modern times has been from savagery towards civilization. On the problem of this relation of savage to civilized life, almost every one of the thousands of facts discussed in the succeeding chapters has its direct bearing. Survival in Culture, placing all along the course of advancing civilization way-marks full of meaning to those who can decipher their



signs, even now sets up in our midst primæval monuments of barbaric thought and life. Its investigation tells strongly in favour of the view that the European may find among the Greenlanders or Maoris many a trait for reconstructing the picture of his own primitive ancestors. Next comes the problem of the Origin of Language. Obscure as many parts of this problem still remain, its clearer positions lie open to the investigation whether speech took its origin among mankind in the savage state, and the result of the enquiry is that consistently with all known evidence, this may have been the case. From the examination of the Art of Counting a far more definite consequence is shown. It may be confidently asserted, that not only is this important art found in a rudimentary state among savage tribes, but that satisfactory evidence proves numeration to have been developed by rational invention from this low stage up to that in which we ourselves possess it. The examination of Mythology contained in the first volume, is for the most part made from a special point of view, on evidence collected for a special purpose, that of tracing the relation between the myths of savage tribes and their analogues among more civilized nations. The issue of such enquiry goes far to prove that the earliest myth-maker arose and flourished among savage hordes, setting on foot an art which his more cultured successors would carry on, till its results came to be fossilized in superstition, mistaken for history, shaped and draped in poetry, or cast aside as lying folly.

Nowhere, perhaps, are broad views of historical development more needed than in the study of religion. Notwithstanding all that has been written to make the world acquainted with the lower theologies, the popular ideas of their place in history and their relation to the faiths of higher nations are still of the mediæval type. It is wonderful to contrast some missionary journals with Max Müller's Essays, and to set the unappreciating hatred and ridicule that is lavished by narrow hostile zeal on Brahmanism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, besides the catholic sympathy with which deep and wide knowledge can survey those ancient and noble phases of man's religious consciousness; nor, because the religions of savage tribes may be rude and primitive compared with the great Asiatic systems, do they lie too low for interest and even for respect. The question really lies between understanding and misunderstanding them. Few who will give their minds to master the general principles of savage religion will ever again think it ridiculous, or the knowledge of it superfluous to the rest of mankind. Far from its beliefs and practices being a rubbish-heap of miscellaneous folly, they are consistent and logical in so high a degree as to begin, as soon as even roughly classified, to display the principles of their formation and development; and these principles prove to be essentially rational, though working in a mental condition of intense and inveterate ignorance. It is with a sense of attempting an investigation which bears very closely on the current theology of our

own day, that I have set myself to examine systematically, among the lower races, the development of Animism; that is to say, the doctrine of souls and other spiritual beings in general. More than half of the present work is occupied with a mass of evidence from all regions of the world, displaying the nature and meaning of this great element of the Philosophy of Religion, and tracing its transmission, expansion, restriction, modification, along the course of history into the midst of our own modern thought. Nor are the questions of small practical moment which have to be raised in a similar attempt to trace the development of certain prominent Rites and Ceremonies—customs so full of instruction as to the inmost powers of religion, whose outward expression and practical result they are.

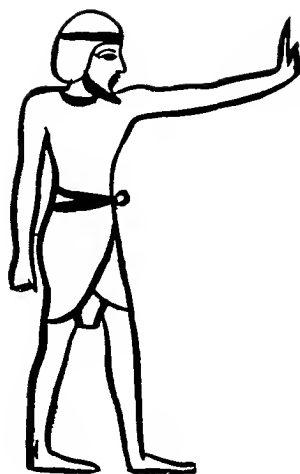
In these investigations, however, made rather from an ethnographic than a theological point of view, there has seemed little need of entering into direct controversial argument, which indeed I have taken pains to avoid as far as possible. The connexion which runs through religion, from its rudest forms up to the status of an enlightened Christianity, may be conveniently treated of with little recourse to dogmatic theology. The rites of sacrifice and purification may be studied in their stages of development without entering into questions of their authority and value, nor does an examination of the successive phases of the world's belief in a future life demand a discussion of the arguments adduced for or against the doctrine itself. The ethnographic results may then be left as materials for professed theologians, and it will not perhaps be long before evidence so fraught with meaning shall take its legitimate place. To fall back once again on the analogy of natural history, the time may soon come when it will be thought as unreasonable for a scientific student of theology not to have a competent acquaintance with the principles of the religions of the lower races, as for a physiologist to look with the contempt of past centuries on evidence derived from the lower forms of life, deeming the structure of mere invertebrate creatures matter unworthy of his philosophic study.

Not merely as a matter of curious research, but as an important practical guide to the understanding of the present and the shaping of the future, the investigation into the origin and early development of civilization must be pushed on zealously. Every possible avenue of knowledge must be explored, every door tried to see if it is open. No kind of evidence need be left untouched on the score of remoteness or complexity, of minuteness or triviality. The tendency of modern enquiry is more and more towards the conclusion that if law is anywhere, it is everywhere. To despair of what a conscientious collection and study of facts may lead to, and to declare any problem insoluble because difficult and far off, is distinctly to be on the wrong side in science; and he who will choose a hopeless task may set himself to discover the limits of discovery. One re-

members Comte starting in his account of astronomy with a remark on the necessary limitation of our knowledge of the stars: we conceive, he tells us, the possibility of determining their form, distance, size, and movement, whilst we should never by any method be able to study their chemical composition, their mineralogical structure, &c. Had the philosopher lived to see the application of spectrum analysis to this very problem, his proclamation of the dispiriting doctrine of necessary ignorance would perhaps have been recanted in favour of a more hopeful view. And it seems to be with the philosophy of remote human life somewhat as with the study of the nature of the celestial bodies. The processes to be made out in the early stages of our mental evolution lie distant from us in time as the stars lie distant from us in space, but the laws of the universe are not limited with the direct observation of our senses. There is vast material to be used in our enquiry; many workers are now busied in bringing this material into shape, though little may have yet been done in proportion to what remains to do; and already it seems not too much to say that the vague outlines of a philosophy of primæval history are beginning to come within our view.

## 2 The Human Being in Culture Theory

Morris E. Opler



A VERY OLD PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM RAISES THE QUESTION OF FREE WILL. *To what extent, it asks, can man determine his own destiny? Is it possible for man to determine his own course, or is that course predetermined by various forces and situations which predate the actor? And there are various determinisms posed to supply the active agency of history: gods, demons or divine will; technology, economics or culture more broadly construed. Regardless of the kind of determinism involved, its application to human behavior has the necessary consequence of diminishing the free action of the individual human being to set and carry out his own course. Thus Leslie White, whom we encounter in the selection after this (II:3), argues that men, far from controlling the course of cultural development, "are merely the instruments through which cultures express themselves."*

*White presents his position as a minority view and shows how the general trend of thought in social science tends to be idealistic and favorable to free will approaches. Yet precisely the same tactic is manifest in Opler's article, below. The popularity of either thesis or antithesis is not terribly relevant to the argument, but it does have interesting*

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The author (b. 1907) is Professor of Anthropology at Cornell University. He has carried out field research in India and among a number of North American Indian societies, particularly various Apache groups. His Chiricahua ethnography, *An Apache Life-Way* (1941), has recently been reissued. He has published many theoretical articles and is especially interested in anthropological conceptions of cultural dynamics.

aspects. For example, the problem is sometimes couched in direct political terms and the materialistic determinism is frequently associated with Marxism. Yet, as Professor Opler points out, theological determinisms have been much longer lived than non-theological ones and have had perhaps even less role for human voluntarism. On the other hand, few voluntaristic philosophies go to such extremes as the expressed views of Mao Tse-tung which assert that people can decide to do just about anything and can accomplish it if they are sufficiently strong-minded, like "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains."

So, welcome! in this and the next couple of selections, to one of the most fascinating debates of all time.

I have recently been editing a life story of an American Indian which I recorded in the field. I have hoped that this could be an introduction to the culture as well as to the events of an individual's life, and so I was prepared to furnish explanatory notes to fill in gaps and to clarify statements and references that might be obscure to the reader who was not a specialist. This exercise, which turned out to be much more extensive and demanding than I had anticipated, forced me to do a good deal of thinking about the relation of the narrator of the life story to his culture and, by extension, about the relation of the human being and culture in general. I knew that a good many able scholars had concerned themselves with this problem area before me, and so I turned to the literature for stimulation and information. I became very much interested in a set of premises about the matter which I believe had its earliest full expression in the works of William Sumner and soon thereafter entered the anthropological literature. These publications are too voluminous to review exhaustively, but I would like to summarize enough of the material to give a clear indication of the direction of thought it represents, and then I should like to offer a few reflections of my own.

Although his book *Folkways* was published in 1906, William Graham Sumner tells us in his preface that he used its concepts and data for lecture material as early as 1885. If this is the case, the tenets advanced by this prominent cultural sociologist are now nearly 80 years old. Yet they must seem remarkably current to the contemporary cultural anthropologist, for they anticipated and parallel much that he is asked to accept today.

Sumner begins his book with these ringing words: "If we put together all that we have learned from anthropology and ethnography about primitive men and primitive society, we perceive that the first task of life is to live. Men begin with acts, not with thoughts. Every moment brings necessities which must be satisfied at once. Need was the first experience, and it was followed at once by a blundering effort to satisfy

it." I call attention to the haste and complete confidence with which Sumner subordinates the intellectual to the practical and behavioral.

How then did man move to satisfy his needs? How, indeed, did he recognize his needs? In answer Sumner leans heavily on social or cultural Darwinism. I quote: "Pleasure and pain, on the one side and the other, were the rude constraints which defined the line on which efforts must proceed. The ability to distinguish between pleasure and pain is the only psychical power which is to be assumed. Thus ways of doing things were selected, which were expedient. They answered the purpose better than other ways, or with less toil and pain. Along the course on which efforts were compelled to go, habit, routine, and skill were developed." Here, then, is an early statement concerning adaptive and developmental processes in culture.

If life so described appears harsh, misery at least had company, for Sumner reminds us: "The struggle to maintain existence was carried on, not individually, but in groups. Each profited by the other's experience; hence there was concurrence towards that which proved to be most expedient. All at last adopted the same way for the same purpose; hence the ways turned into customs and became mass phenomena. . . . The folkways, at a time, provide for all the needs of life then and there. They are uniform, universal in the group, imperative, and invariable." This monolithic, unvarying nature of the folkways is a constant refrain. However, it is not too well reconciled in Sumner's doctrine with the divergences and experiments which he tells us are seized upon by cultural selection.

Though the group is said to benefit by individual experience, Sumner is careful to point out that this is not due to intelligence or resolution. On this point he declares: "The folkways, therefore, are not creations of human purpose and wit. They are like products of natural forces which men unconsciously set in operation, or they are like the instinctive ways of animals, which are developed out of experience, which reach a final form of maximum adaptation to an interest, which are handed down by tradition and admit of no exception or variation, yet change to meet new conditions, still within the same limited methods, and without rational reflection or purpose." After quoting a passage about primitive man in which occurs this sentence, "From his cradle to his grave he is the slave of ancient usage," Sumner comments, "All men act in this way with only a little wider margin of voluntary variation."

A little further on Sumner introduces another concept, that of the tendency toward harmonious integration of a culture at any one time horizon. Of this he writes: "The folkways are, therefore, (1) subject to a strain of improvement towards better adaptation of means to ends, as long as the adaptation is so imperfect that pain is produced. They are

also (2) subject to a strain of consistency with each other, because they all answer their several purposes with less friction and antagonism when they cooperate and support each other. The forms of industry, the forms of the family, the notions of property, the constructions of rights, and the types of religion show the strain of consistency with each other through the whole history of civilization." Combination and cooperation are also forced upon men by the severity of their struggle for existence against nature and other organisms. According to Sumner, "It is, therefore, the competition of life which is the societal element, and which produces societal organization." But this "antagonistic cooperation" is an armed truce among individuals of a prevailingly unfriendly species, who are only temporarily suppressing rivalries in the face of some joint rancor or greater common interest.

In any tradition, according to Sumner, "there is a right way to catch game, to win a wife, to make one's self appear, to cure disease, to honor ghosts, to treat comrades or strangers, to behave when a child is born, on the warpath, in council, and so on in all cases which can arise. . . . The notion of right is in the folkways. It is not outside of them, of independent origin, and brought to them to test them. . . . World philosophy, life policy, right, rights, and morality are all products of the folkways." And when strong feelings concerning their righteousness and truth become associated with particular folkways, they become mores. In Sumner's words, "The mores are the folkways, including the philosophical and ethical generalizations as to societal welfare which are suggested by them, and inherent in them, as they grow."

It should be obvious by now that what Sumner called folkways and mores the anthropologist today identifies as "culture" or at least as important sectors of culture. If there is any doubt of this, we have only to turn to the passage in which the author says of the folkways and mores, "They belong to a superorganic system of relations, conventions, and institutional arrangements."

Can any great ethical or philosophical ideas arise from without the system to annul or reshape the mores? "No," says Sumner, for such concepts must be derived from and remain secondary to the mores. To quote his own words: "In fact, the real process in great bodies of men is not one of deduction from any great principle of philosophy or ethics. It is one of minute efforts to live well under existing conditions, which efforts are repeated indefinitely by great numbers, getting strength from habit and from the fellowship of united action. The resultant folkways become coercive. All are forced to conform, and the folkways dominate the societal life. Then they seem true and right, and arise into mores as the norm of welfare. Thence are produced faiths, ideas, doctrines, religions, and philosophies, according to the stage of civilization

and the fashions of reflection and generalization." In scornful reference to "legislation and preaching" to achieve ends which run counter to the mores Sumner remarks: "We might as well plan to reorganize our globe by redistributing the elements in it."

Sumner is particularly critical of the notion that any individual, even a scientist, can escape being the creature of his culture. In a forthright passage he declares:

It is vain to imagine that any man can lift himself out of these characteristic features in the mores of the group to which he belongs, especially when he is dealing with the nearest and most familiar phenomena of every day life. It is vain to imagine that a "scientific man" can divest himself of prejudice or previous opinion, and put himself in an attitude of neutral independence towards the mores. He might as well try to get out of gravity or the pressure of the atmosphere. The most learned scholar reveals all the philistinism and prejudice of the man-on-the-curbstone when mores are in discussion. The most elaborate discussion only consists in revolving on one's own axis . . .

Consequently Sumner considers it fatuous to expect independence and freedom in individual decisions, for a man is but the reflection and register of the cultural forces that have played upon him. About this he asserts:

When a man thinks that he is acting most independently, on his personal prerogative, he is at best only balancing against each other the different codes in which he has been educated, e.g. that of the trades union against that of the Sunday school, or of the school against that of the family. What we think "natural" and universal, and to which we attribute an objective reality, is the sum of traits whose origin is so remote, and which we share with so many, that we do not know when or how we took them up, and we can remember no rational selection by which we adopted them.

In an especially strong statement on the same subject Sumner espouses complete cultural determinism and total domination of the individual by the superorganic, phrasing the matter thus:

The most important fact about the mores is their dominion over the individual. Arising he knows not whence or how, they meet his opening mind in earliest childhood, give him his outfit of ideas, faiths, and tastes, and lead him into prescribed mental processes. They bring to him codes of action, standards, and rules of ethics. They have a model of the man as-he-should-be to which they mold him, in spite of himself and without his knowledge.

If it is naive to expect individuals to act independently of culture, it is still more visionary, in Sumner's opinion, to suppose that a whole society will think critically about the content of its culture. As he expresses it:



Each group took its own way, making its own assumptions, and following its own logic. So there was great variety and discord in their policies and philosophies, but within the area of a custom, during its dominion, its authority is absolute; and hence, although the usages are infinitely various, directly contradictory, and mutually abominable, they are, within their area of dominion, of equal value and force, and they are the standards of what is true and right. The groups have often tried to convert each other by argument and reason. They have never succeeded. Each one's reasons are the tradition which it has received from its ancestors. That does not admit of argument . . .

Sumner's assumption that culture was born of man's efforts to survive in his struggle for the material means of existence becomes the basis for a variety of technological determinism. This is well illustrated in his discussion of slavery, in which he considers institutional and ideological development and even institutional and ideological relapse to be conditioned by the character of technology and source of motive power. Again there is a depreciation of the intellectual, philosophical, and humanistic. This is his interesting dictum in regard to the matter:

Slavery alleviated the status of women; the domestication of beasts of draft and burden alleviated the status of slaves; we shall see below that serfs got freedom when wind, falling water, and steam were loaded with the heavy tasks. Just now the heavy burdens are borne by steam; electricity is just coming into use to help bear them. Steam and electricity at last mean coal, and the amount of coal in the globe is an arithmetical fact. When the coal is used up will slavery once more begin? One thing only can be affirmed with confidence; that is, that as no philosophical dogmas caused slavery to be abolished, so no philosophical dogmas can prevent its reintroduction if economic changes should make it fit and suitable again.

Sumner even saw language, that highly symbolic possession of man, in most practical and adaptive terms. "Language," he explains, "is a product of the need of cooperative understanding in all the work, and in connection with all the interests, of life. It is a societal phenomenon. It was necessary in war, the chase, and industry so soon as these interests were pursued cooperatively."

Though he saw new technologies and fresh sources of motive power as a means of transforming social relations, Sumner had nothing but contempt for what he called "the superstition of education." On this score he thundered:

Popular education and certain faiths about popular education are in the mores of our time. We regard illiteracy as an abomination. We ascribe to elementary book learning power to form character, make good citizens, keep family mores pure, elevate morals, establish individual character, civilize barbarians, and cure social vice and disease. We apply schooling as a remedy for every social phenomenon which we do not like. . . . Not even the increased production of wealth, much less the improvement of character, are assured results. Our faith

in the power of book learning is excessive and unfounded. It is a superstition of the age. The education which forms character and produces faith in sound principles of life comes through personal influence and example. It is borne on the mores . . .

A feeling that true wisdom and nobility consist of obeisance to cultural norms rather than attempts to modify or elude them guides Sumner's appraisal of the past, as well. The "humanists of Italy" particularly provoke his ire, and he laments "the excessive petting and spoiling they met with when luck favored them." The "individualism" of the Renaissance repels him, and he refers to it in these caustic words: "Recent writers on the period have emphasized the individualism which was produced. By this is meant the emancipation of men of talent from traditional morality, and the notion that any man might do anything which would win success for his purposes."

The main provision of Sumner's doctrine can now be summarized. In his view superorganic elements (social forms, language, beliefs, etc.) arose when man, driven to cooperation for the sake of security and to experimentation by his stark needs in the struggle for survival against natural forces and other organisms, found crude solutions to his most pressing problems. Continued trial and error in an unplanned and spontaneous effort to achieve more suitable means to ends resulted in the production of variant ways of behaving and thinking. Those that reduced discomfort and danger were accepted, and they replaced the older, less satisfactory customs. When a folkway or custom was felt by all to be particularly useful and important, it was supported by sentiment as well as by habit, and activities that challenged or opposed it were frowned upon and penalized. Folkways invested with such an aura of righteousness and truth became mores. The folkways and mores came to constitute a system of beliefs and practices external to the individual and coercive upon him. Since they are the cumulative product of the actions of a large number of human beings living in groups for long periods, individuals have no consciousness of their own determinate part in the process or of the moment particular elements were introduced. Consequently the totality of folkways and mores has become so impersonal, vast, external, entrenched, and automatic that individuals cannot hope to influence it. In fact, just the opposite is true. It impresses itself upon the individual from his earliest years and shapes and controls his thoughts and actions until he dies. Modes of education and philosophical ideas, unless they are in accord with culture, are seldom viable and are powerless to shape culture. True wisdom, unlike the exhibitionism and individualism of the Renaissance, consists in allowing the culture to develop in its own way, for it will improve at its own pace by its own mechanisms. The individual must recognize that culture represents the hard-won

experience of the past, and he should come to terms with the conditions it imposes at any given place and time.

Although Sumner made liberal use of anthropological materials and sources in *Folkways*, he is identified professionally with the discipline of sociology. It was not until nine years after the publication of *Folkways* that a professional anthropologist dealt as forthrightly with the question of the autonomy of culture and its relationship to the individual. When this anthropological contribution did come, in the form of A. L. Kroeber's "Eighteen Professions," its message was actually not too much different in principle from Sumner's.

In this first paper addressed to the general subject, Kroeber calls for a clear distinction between history, in which he also includes sociology and historical anthropology (cultural anthropology in present terminology), and biology, under which he subsumes psychology and physical anthropology. He then proceeds, in his eighteen propositions, to characterize history and to differentiate it from the study of man and of individual minds. He comes to a number of conclusions which have remained with us in one guise or another to this day. The material to be studied by history, or anthropology, he declares, is not man, but his works. Although a certain mental constitution of man must be assumed by the historian or anthropologist, the individual and personal have no value save as illustration. Civilization, though carried by men and existing through them, is an entity in itself and of another order from life. Geography, or physical environment, is material made use of by civilization, not a factor which shares or explains civilization. Historic events are conditioned by preceding historic events; cause in history or anthropology must be sought in the flow of historic events.

"Eighteen Professions" was not only Kroeber's earliest, but also his most extreme, statement in this area of thought. His subsequent writings on the subject form a very gradual slope away from the opinions expressed in it. He probably became less and less satisfied with it. At any rate, he did not reproduce it, or even mention it, in his collection of essays, *The Nature of Culture*. Yet in its day it gave impetus to an influential line of thought, and, in one respect especially, it has been, to my mind, most mischievous. In an attempt to establish a clear division of labor between history and biology, Kroeber assigned the study of the human individual to biology. This questionable allocation has persisted to a surprising degree. Not long ago I was told in all seriousness by a fellow anthropologist that to suggest that the individual has any influence on the nature and direction of culture is to open the door to biological and racist explanations. Apparently he assumed that the term "individual" could refer only to the human physical organism *sans* all culture, a phenomenon, incidentally, that I have yet to encounter. In point of fact, the biologist has only limited concern for the individual organism as such.

In terms of the data of his own discipline he is as much interested in patterns or relatively stable organizations of physical features and their persistence (species, subspecies, and breeding lines) as any anthropologist of Kroeber's stamp.

Two years later, in 1917, Kroeber published his classic article "The Superorganic." In it the terminology of "Eighteen Professions" is somewhat revised. The terms "culture" and "the superorganic" take the place of "history" and historical anthropology"; "civilization" is used synonymously with "culture." There is still no clear distinction made between the "cultural" and the "social." But the main arguments are refinements, in a slightly subdued vein, of those presented in "Eighteen Professions." Culture is represented as being an emergent occupying a sphere or level of its own. The manifest activities of individuals in a culture do not disprove their subordination to it, for "the concrete effect of each individual upon civilization is determined by civilization itself." If organic influences (and note that individual influences are considered organic) are detected in culture, they can be ignored, for although "... social science . . . does not deny individuality any more than it denies the individual . . . it does refuse to deal with either individuality or individual as such. And it bases this refusal solely on denial of the validity of either factor for the achievement of its proper aims." To concern ourselves with individuals, Kroeber opines, would be to accept the "obviously illogical assumption that because without individuals civilization could not exist, civilization therefore is only a sum total of the psychic operations of a mass of individuals." In culture, he declares, "a new factor has arisen which was to work out its own independent consequences." Again he merges the biological and the psychological and contrasts them with the cultural, saying: "The mind and the body are but facets of the same organic material or activity; the social substance—or unsubstantial fabric, if one prefers the phrase—the thing that we call civilization, transcends them for all its being rooted in life."

It was in this article that Kroeber first considered the bearing of instances of genius and duplicate inventions upon his theories. The genius is likely to have some accomplishments to his credit whenever he appears, Kroeber concludes, but the culture and its state and needs will dictate what his contribution is to be. Genius is determined by the culture. After describing a number of discoveries which were made more than once within a short time span by two or more gifted men, Kroeber says with a flourish: "There may be those who see in these pulsing events only a meaningless play of capricious fortuitousness; but there will be others to whom they reveal a glimpse of a great and inspiring inevitability which rises as far above the accidents of personality as the march of the heavens transcends the wavering contacts of random footprints on clouds of earth."

In 1919 Kroeber published the results of a study of changes which had taken place from 1844 to 1917 in women's fashions in the Western world. He reported that in respect to certain basic measurements such as skirt length and width there were cycles which took long periods to complete. From this he inferred a principle of regularity or order in social change. Moreover, he counted this a refutation of the notion that individual preferences could have been effectively involved, for "when a swing of fashion requires a century for its satisfaction, a minimum of at least several personalities is involved." This led him to a discussion of social change in general, and he concluded "that the greater or less innate capacity of this or that individual, or of any limited number of individuals, is of negligible consequence. . . . In short, monotheism arises, an iron technique is discovered, institutions change, or dresses become full at a given period and place—subsequent to other cultural events and as the result of them, in other words—because they must." There is no comparable short cut to determine what happens and why in the interplay of personalities. Says Kroeber pessimistically concerning his prospect: "A geologist could as usefully set himself the task of explaining the size and shape of each pebble in a gravel bed. We are but such stones." But despite the impossibility of investigating the contributions of individuals, Kroeber is sure that they are negligible. "When a tide sets one way for fifty years," he tells us, "men float with it, or thread their course across it; those who breast the vast stream condemn themselves in advance to futility of accomplishment."

In 1940, in collaboration with Jane Richardson, Kroeber again analyzed women's dress fashions in the Western world, this time with data covering a much longer time span. Again the results are interpreted as a confrontation between overriding cultural forces and the individual. In their conclusions the authors say: "The long swings of proportion which we have determined seem comparable to what economists call secular trends. . . . No one attributes either these larger economic trends or the fluctuations to individual initiative. It is of course conceivable that economic determinants are social in their nature and stylistic ones individual. . . . It is rather more likely that what holds in one domain of human culture holds also in another." In the final paragraph of the conclusions, psychological factors are given short shrift and the primacy of the sociocultural is accented. Explain the authors: "We have deliberately avoided explanation of our phenomena in terms of psychological factors. . . . We do not deny that such psychological motivations may be operative. We do believe that as explanations they are conjectural, and scientifically useless, because, to date at least, they depend on factors which are unmeasurable and undefinable. On the contrary, we think we have shown that through behavioristic and inductive procedures operating

wholly within the sociocultural level, functional correlations as style and fashion changes."

The claims of these last sentences deserve to be examined carefully. What correlations are here established between culture and fashion? The correlations are primarily with time, which is rather impartial with respect to the issue. It is demonstrated that measurements of women's dress in the Western world moved from extremes of length and shortness, width and narrowness, in fairly regular cycles in the more than 300-year period between 1605 and 1937. But what of the rest of Western culture during this same time period? During these years pure science was moving in one general direction, technology was moving in one general direction, medicine was moving in one general direction, political forms were in general moving toward the limitation of the prerogatives of kings and nobles and the enlargement of the governing group and the electorate. But skirts, we are told, went from one extreme to another and back again with supreme indifference for the one-directional drift of major segments of the culture. It would seem that this raises more questions about the nature of culture and of fashion, too, for that matter, than it answers. One wonders whether the authors (and this is a chronic failing of cultural determinists) were not so intent upon minimizing the psychological and the individual that they neglected to test for the cultural. In fact it could be argued that the only convincing functional correlations supplied are with psychological factors, brought in by the back door, for it appears that the greatest periods of pattern "strain" and variability coincide with periods of popular distress, dislocation, and instability occasioned by war and revolution.

By the time the 1940 study was published, criticisms of the 1919 effort by Floyd Allport, the psychologist, and others, had accumulated, and Kroeber sought to answer them in a short essay written as an appendix. This statement is an excellent example of the tendency of the cultural determinist to seek to prove his case negatively and to discomfit opponents by an argument that is, in the last analysis, *ad hominem*. He says: "That there is a certain 'order' or 'regularity' in the phenomena, enough to prevent their being construed as due to the caprices of individual human wills, I continue to believe, and think Dr. Richardson and I have overwhelmingly proved in the present paper. 'Determinism' in this sense I adhere to: that the actions of individual persons are determined much more by styles and other sociocultural influences than they determine them." Note that without explanation or proof individual human will is assumed always to be capricious, so that regularity and uniformity by default and definition have to be accounted for by the superorganic.

Much of the essay is a restatement of this theme in different ways. In one place the author declares: "If it is mere philosophy or mysticism

to believe that culture determines the actions of personalities, at any rate determines them far more than their uncontrolled volitions determine culture, then I am a mystic." Again it is volition which is "uncontrolled." By implication and contrast culture comes to be neat and orderly. In another place he claims that he is arguing for "no more than that there are stylistic trends of an amplitude, effectiveness, and duration indicating that they are governed by factors which are unknown but which must be superindividual: a random series of free wills could not pull together in one direction so long and decisively." Here again we arrive at a cultural explanation by assumptions and elimination rather than by proof. The assumptions are that individual actions are capricious and disorderly, cultural developments tidy and orderly. Since regularities have been discerned, the factors, though unknown, must be cultural!

Kroeber has something to say about the motivation of his critics. He does not consider that what is involved is conscious motivation, but he can see no other explanation "for the resistance to yielding an inch to any form or degree of cultural determinism" than "that the resistance goes back to the common and deeply implanted assumption that our wills are free. As this assumption has had to yield ground elsewhere, it has taken refuge in the collective, social, and historical sphere. Since the chemists, physiologists, and psychologists have unlimbered their artillery, the personal freedom of the will is thankless terrain to maintain. Culture they have not yet attacked; so that becomes a refuge. Whatever the degree to which we have ceased to assert being free agents as individuals, in the social realm we can still claim to shape our destinies. . . . I realize that any interpretation which diminishes the range of free personality and enlarges the effectiveness of superpersonal cultural influences is likely to be unpalatable. It will irritate many and it will elicit rejections. But I am compelled to adhere to it—no doubt by the strand of culture of which I am a part."

This is the kind of attack that reduces a strong, confident anthropologist to a cringing apologist. He has just finished urging his students to eschew ethnocentrism, and he cannot bear to be called anthropocentric, which sounds almost as bad. It hurts him to the quick to be told that, in company with fortune tellers, sentimentalists, and assorted ignoramuses, he is defending the last pocket of resistance against the advancing forces of science and enlightenment. Some members of the profession have become so unsettled over the possible charge that they are studying capricious man rather than solid culture that they will take the fifth amendment rather than be forced into a literal translation of the name of the discipline.

In the course of time Kroeber became less intransigent about the autonomy of culture and the elimination of the human individual from consideration as a causal factor in culture. In 1955 he could write: "What

does the phrase *sui generis* mean or import? It can mean that culture is so wholly of its own kind that nothing else impinges on it; it is completely autonomous, and therefore if culture changes it is through immanent forces, through something predestined or predetermined. . . . As I look back, I see in myself in the past certain inclinations in that direction which, however, I hope I have purged. And *sui generis* may mean nothing more than that culture is an aspect of phenomena which has a certain uniqueness, without asserting that uniqueness involves absolute autonomy—that culture is something carved out of the universe and then set aside from the rest of it.”

In 1955, too, in another paper, Kroeber smuggled individual members of the human race into culture theory sufficiently to say: “[culture] is acquired by learning from other individuals of the species, and is practiced and somewhat modified by each member of the human race individually; and his modifications enter into the continuum or joint product which is passed on to subsequent individuals.” This was a significant concession.

Yet Kroeber was not too consistent in maintaining this greater flexibility. In a 1958 publication he is back almost to his 1915 starting point when he declares: “Sociologists and anthropologists agree in dealing with sociocultural phenomena autonomously. Sociocultural data rest on biotic and individual psychic factors, of course, and are therefore limited by them; but they are not derivable or constructively explicable from them. The analysis and understanding of sociocultural phenomena must be made first of all in terms of sociocultural structure and process. . . . Psychology is of course basically oriented toward individuals, or *the individual*, much as in biology . . .”.

In his later writings on the subject there are statements, sometimes even in the same article, which are difficult to reconcile. In one section of an article we are told that anthropology has no part in the study of the individual human being: “The human individual is examined biologically in anatomy, physiology, and the other medical sciences, and as regards certain aspects of his behavior in psychology.” But in the final paragraph of the article we are assured that “culture rests on society, on the individual personality and species, on a long and continuing history of life; and for full apprehension it will ultimately have to be brought into full relation with all these.” One would suppose that, if culture rests in part on the individual personality and will have to be brought into “full relation” with the study of the individual personality and if anthropology is so largely the study of culture, individual personality would be a fit topic for inclusion in anthropology. I think we can say that toward the end of his career the distinctions that once seemed so clear to Kroeber become much more blurred. What was once a matter of separate level or realm now may turn on the purpose of the observer, on whether he is interested



in the microscopic or macroscopic. Or it may be a matter of the lens at one's disposal, as Kroeber suggested when he wrote in a paper published in 1960, "... culture is in one sense the endlessly complex and unordered behavior of men seen ordered through a lens of long-enough focus . . .".

The superorganic or cultural had been named by Spencer, utilized in principle by Lippert, and defined by Tylor, but the extended and concentrated treatment given it by Sumner and then Kroeber, at a time when sociology, anthropology, psychology, and history were reviewing their concepts and attempting to define their boundaries, gave it a vitality and a currency that was to make it a familiar word by the early 1930's. In 1929 Malcolm Willey, in a paper that made acknowledgments to Sumner and defended Kroeber against the criticisms of Allport, furnished a statement of cultural autonomy and determinism and of individual impotence that was quite as drastic as anything found in either of his sources. By 1932, in his paper "The Science of Culture," Murdock is prepared to assert: "That culture, a uniquely human phenomenon independent of the laws of biology and psychology, constitutes the proper subject of the social sciences, is a proposition accepted with practical unanimity by social anthropologists today." In this statement Murdock, who was greatly influenced by Sumner and his student Keller, as well as by Kroeber, goes as far as, or farther than, any of his predecessors in his views of cultural autonomy and determinism. His paper bristles with statements like these: "Nevertheless, culture does not depend on individuals." "Moreover, the individual is not a free agent with respect to culture." "Even in the case of invention—the formation of a new habit which becomes a folkway when adopted by others—the individual is little more than the agent of social and historical forces." "This view does not deny or minimize genius, but simply maintains that it is irrelevant to culture." "Evolution in the folkways, as Keller has so overwhelmingly demonstrated, is governed by massive impersonal forces. Hence it is both possible and permissible to study the history of a folkway, or the evolution of culture in general, without reference to individuals or their organic and mental characteristics." "Psychology deals only with the individual." "But the science of culture is just as distinct, as to subject matter, laws, and principles, from biology and psychology as the biological sciences are from those of the inorganic realm."

Since he views culture as superindividual, continuous, and cumulative, Murdock concludes, with Sumner, that its growth does not depend too much upon intelligence. His anti-intellectualism is not pushed as far as some latter-day cultural determinists would have it, but it is sweeping enough. "A realistic view of human culture," he says, "indicates that the role of intelligence is smaller than many have assumed. It is a truism of

psychology and almost a matter of general knowledge that the chief use of the human mind is the invention of reasons or justifications for our beliefs and actions. The science of culture has suffered much in the past from rationalization or wishful thinking, and it should be among the first to minimize the importance of intelligence in human affairs. Comparatively little intelligence is needed to acquire a habit or folkway, none to preserve it."

The view of man and culture that has been illustrated here from the writings of Sumner, Kroeber, and Murdock is present in the works of many others as well. In addition to those already cited, it can be found in whole or in part in publications of Emile Durkheim, C. H. Judd, William Ogburn, C. S. Ford, James Ford, W. W. Newcomb, Jr., Philip Bagby, Leslie White, and others. There is a generous component of it even in the productions of those who have been charged with excessive interest in the role of the individual and with psychologizing. Thus Ralph Linton wrote: "The individual is a living organism capable of independent thought, feeling, and action, but with his independence limited and all his responses profoundly modified by contact with the society and culture in which he develops. . . ." "The individual's patterns of overt behavior and, even more, that subtle thing which we term his personality, represent an integration of his past experiences. Most of these experiences can be phrased in terms of culture. They derive mainly from contacts with other members of his society, whose behaviors fall within the ranges established by its culture, i.e., its real culture patterns. Because of the very multiplicity of these individuals, the differences in their interpretation of the culture patterns will tend to cancel out, so that the ultimate result will be very much the same as if the individual had been exposed to repetitive experience with the mode of the pattern range." One wonders whether, after this canceling out process has taken place, we have much more left than Kroeber's pebbles on the beach.

The doctrine we have outlined of autonomous, dynamic, and external culture and of dependent and impotent man can, as we have seen, be put in very compelling and persuasive terms. It has been and is held by some of the most prominent and influential social scientists of our time. This has given it a prestige that makes it difficult to resist and an appearance of well-founded tradition. But these premises and terms call for a closer examination than some have been willing to give them. We have been told, for instance, that this is a scientific, objective view, supplanting a theological outlook which placed man at the center of all things. On the contrary, the theological outlook which ruled for so long is even less flattering to man than this one. It pictures him as a creature born in sin and entirely reliant upon divine grace for progress and salvation. Man is even more completely the dependent variable in the theological view than he is in cultural determinism. This view is not,

perhaps, anthropocentric, but it is hierocentric; or one might say it is geocentric, conceiving this earth as a theater in which divine purpose unfolds and gods move men about as counters. It was not until a reaction from such a position occurred in the Western world during the Renaissance that anthropocentrism had some expression in Humanism. I do not consider anthropocentrism to be a dirty word. I do not expect biology, cytology, genetics, or anthropology to be unstructured, inflated in their claims, or sentimental. But I do expect them to be, respectively, biocentric, cytocentric, genocentric, and *anthropocentric*. I expect them to explore and understand their subject matter thoroughly and to investigate its articulations with every field of human knowledge. And I do not expect them to erect artificial or *a priori* barriers within their disciplines or at their highly tentative boundaries that will shut off debate. If this had happened in inorganic chemistry, organic chemistry, cytology, and genetics, we would not today have the collaboration and the new knowledge that are moving us toward an understanding of the very processes of life.

For an example of the dangers of rigidity and of the premature claims of cultural or any other autonomy, let us turn once again briefly to Kroeber's study of women's fashions in the Western world. Milton Singer, in a graceful preface to a new collection of Kroeber's articles, suggests that Kroeber's "repression" of individuals was "strictly methodological, a deliberate effort to hold constant the psychological and other non-cultural factors, while he studied the quality and sequences of cultural forms." In the case of the study of women's fashions, this was most commendable; certainly the scientific and reasonable thing to do was to test for the cultural factor or factors and to try to control other elements as far as possible. But where is the equally desirable attempt to hold *cultural* factors constant and to test for other possibilities? All that the nonpsychological approach demonstrated was a certain regularity. Why gratuitously attribute this to culture, with its wars and excesses, its accelerations and decelerations? Why not look to the very nature of man for an explanation? Are there not countless instances when man has sought order, stability, and security in his life? When man invented language, was he not labeling and ordering his universe for ready reference? Are there not psychological experiments to suggest that men are disturbed by unfinished designs and incomplete figures? What is the compulsion to finish a crossword puzzle or a game once begun? Is there a systole and diastole in life processes that we translate into cultural terms? Can the matter be closed at the consideration of women's fashions? What of the apparel of men during the same period? Did that change less or more and why? During most of this time interval women were subordinated to men politically, economically, educationally, and religiously. Are there differentials which might lead one to

suspect that dress was one of the few outlets through which women might express themselves? I would not be too proud to seek hints from psychology in regard to such questions. As a matter of fact, the basic design of women's dress does not always move in rhythmic changes over time. Evidence from museum specimens, old photographs, early accounts, and informants' statements suggests that the style of the aboriginal dress of the Mescalero Apache woman was stable for a long period. It still persists in the garb worn by the girl at her puberty rite. There are psychological props for this conservatism and stability. This was the type of dress alleged to have been worn and advocated for earthlings by a culture heroine after whom each Mescalero woman is supposed to model herself.

To say that rhythmic changes in form occur or that long-term stability is maintained is no explanation. That is simply a translation of data into time sequence and is nothing more than a step in an inquiry. I am reminded of an *ojha* or shaman in India who, whenever his interpretation was questioned, silenced the incredulous by a withering glance and the words, "The goddess has spoken." I hope we shall not have comparable functionaries in anthropology to tell us, regardless of the problem or the avenues of investigation which beckon, "Culture has spoken."

My misgivings concerning an extreme and unrelieved doctrine of cultural autonomy and determinism begin at the source, with the very conception of the origin and early period of culture. We are told that the primate which was to become man was probably making and using tools in an inefficient, discontinuous manner at the time when he invented symbols or arbitrary labels for artifact and concept and, by organizing them into a system of references and linking ideas, gave birth to language. This was a glorious achievement, making possible the communication of experience and discovery and the retention of their fruits. This transition from prehuman to human existence occurred between one and two million years ago, we now believe. The being involved in the process was not *Homo sapiens* but a form ancestral to our present species and considered to be inferior to it in potential intelligence and culture-serving capacities. By definition, then, man preceded and originated culture. He was the *primal* mover, whatever one thinks of him as a *prime* mover. This is conceded by all. But, according to the cultural determinists, the invention of the first elements of culture constitutes the last creative act in which man ever engaged. The continuation of culture, the development of culture, the proliferation of culture allegedly then went on automatically and quite apart from him. Yet the capacities that enabled him to invent culture are still present in him. He continues to make and use tools, and he can assign verbal (and today even written) symbols to objects, events, and attitudes. But the lazy

fellow has for over a million years resisted any further involvement in creative acts; he is said to be content to let culture do everything for him. Obediently, he eats enough of what culture prescribes for him and pumps enough air into his lungs so that he can remain what some choose to call a thermodynamic system through which culture can work. If this is a true picture of man, something should be done for him. Perhaps culture has distilled some strong brew or some new kind of hormonal substance that can be administered to him to stir him from his lethargy. For this is the most mysterious, serious, and protracted case of arrested development in the annals of medical history. It may be that the explanation is a psychoanalytic one. We have all heard of "the trauma of birth." Perhaps this complete suspension of creativity and will was a consequence of "a trauma of giving birth."

Obviously something is wrong with the doctrine of the complete subordination of man to culture and the reasoning that supports it. In fact, quite a few things are wrong with it. In the first place, it is based in part on a curious and all-too-convenient double use of the word "individual." The individual is sometimes considered a member of a cultural group; but when it serves the purpose of contrasting the biological and the superorganic, all the culture is instantly leached out of him by some secret process. Then he becomes one of the most trophistic physical organisms ever produced by semantics. You will remember my reference to an occasion when, although I was talking about the enculturated individual, I was accused, by a person who had made a sudden shift to this second meaning, of introducing the physical and the racial into the analysis. It was largely because of this confusion of meanings that Kroeber assigned the study of the individual to biology and psychology and denied it to anthropology. And it is because of this, too, that we are so often told that man must be considered the dependent variable in the man-culture relationship, since the human body has remained a constant during a period when culture has burgeoned and changed so markedly.

The truth is that no human being is a mere organism unless he is a foetus or an imbecile. Perhaps it would be helpful if we restricted our use of the term "organism" to the context of physical anthropology and biology. When we are talking about man in relation to culture, it might be well to employ the terms "human being" or "human individual" or at least to make some attempt to see that employment of the term "individual" carries the correct implication. The human being has been pictured for so long in culture theory as something only slightly above the vegetable that for a considerable period of time it will take effort on the part of anthropologists to recognize the chameleon-like use of the words "organism" and "individual" and to make the necessary intellectual adjustment.

The heart of the difficulty, as I see it, is that when Kroeber reacted

against racist and biological explanations of culture and called for a clear distinction between the organic and the superorganic, he threw the human being out with the ambiotic fluid. His motives were generous and humanistic and his effort, magnificent; but in his enthusiasm he oversimplified and took a hazardous short cut. He forgot—and we who have followed him have been, with less reason, just as culpable—that there is not merely one emergent, culture, at the dawn of the human and cultural horizon, but two. He forgot—and we have made a convenience of the omission—that a human being intelligent enough, perceptive enough, inquisitive enough, retentive enough, and manipulative enough to create culture was as much a break with the organic past as were the first symbols or deliberately taught cultural processes in which man engaged. If we had understood then what should be plain to us now, that it is as important to study man in his culture-building and culture-manipulating roles and in every cultural context as it is to examine the consequences and products of his actions, we would not be forced to repeat the dreary formulas of technological determinism and dialectical materialism as though they were our own bright invention; nor would we be intellectual beggars, living on the crumbs that fall from the tables of physicists. Some anthropologists are willing to overlook a good deal in the way of hyperbole and limitation in cultural determinism because they consider that the concentration on culture as such gave the discipline a focus, a main concept, and a separate field. But there comes a time when elaboration of a half-truth verges on total deception of oneself and others, when a single concept becomes a weight rather than a light, and when a too hastily chosen field turns out to be a stony patch that cannot sustain those who depend on it for sustenance. If there are those who think they can adequately understand the human adventure by studying culture alone, let them wear blinders so they will see no side roads and cheerfully pull straight ahead at their traces. Some of the rest of us prefer to look up and around occasionally and even to face the consequences of having had ancestors who were human beings.

Not only are we assured by cultural determinists that the individual is simply a member of a very slowly changing organic species and therefore could not possibly be responsible for swiftly changing culture, but we are reminded that the individual is born into the culture helpless, dependent, and ignorant and so can hardly be expected to account for the culture. The culture was there before him, and it will doubtless continue after his death, goes the argument. How can the ephemeral explain that which endures? Here again we encounter some semantic double-dealing. When we talk of causal relations in the man-culture equation, we do not, in dealing with culture, substitute the part for the whole. We do not select a trait that entered the stream of culture at some particular moment of time and later passed out of existence and say

that, because this item became part of an on-going system and was at some point eliminated, it could not possibly have had any effect on the whole. We do not assert that, because the horse and buggy and the paddle-wheel steamer are no longer functional in our life, they never could have served a purpose. We think of a culture as a continuous stream of ideas, objects, and events. Single ideas and objects enter and may afterwards be supplanted. It is the organized and long-sustained existence of the collectivity that gives the culture its character and speaks for its reality. If this is the thinking in respect to culture, why do we not use the same criteria concerning the contributions of man? There is no more reason in logic for making the import of *man* depend on the ability of this or that particular human being to live forever or completely to transform his culture than there is to make the test of the molding influence of *culture* turn on what can be demonstrated about the durability or influence of this or that culture trait.

I have heard it charged that the reluctance to credit culture-building to culture itself, the hesitancy to grant that culture increases by the internal interaction of its own elements, is due to intellectual timidity, lack of imagination, and unwillingness to accept the evidence of abstract thought. It is because we cannot see culture at work, as we can watch a man at the lathe, that we doubt its reality as a separate entity, we are told. As far as I am concerned, this is certainly not the case. I have discovered and described clans, though I have never seen one. For that matter I have never seen a village community, in the sense that all of its members were present at one time. Yet I write about villages. I am well aware of the utility of abstractions and constructs. But there is a difference between granting reality to a phenomenon and acknowledging its complete independence. Even the recognition of the autonomy of a phenomenon does not necessarily establish it as the cause of something else.

We have noted how often the cultural autonomists and cultural determinists, from Durkheim and Sumner to the present day, have insisted that culture must be external to man and coercive upon him because, even when he does not share a cultural prescription, he must bow to it. The conclusion drawn from this is that culture lies outside man and rules him. The individual man is made to say, "If this is not part of *my* inner being, it is not of *man*. If it is not true of *me*, it must be external to all humankind." This is a strange argument for those opposed to anthropocentrism to make, for this is a crude form of egocentrism, which, if anything, is worse. Certainly individual men sometimes have to yield to cultural dicta which they do not respect personally. But this does not prove that these convictions exist in an external, cultural realm apart from man. It means, rather, that although the particular individual does not endorse a course of action, so many of his group do that it is

impossible for him to violate their expectations with impunity. The focus of sanction is still human beings and not the external rule they are enforcing. It is astonishing how quickly an individual's behavior changes when he realizes that a sizable percentage of his fellows is as hostile as he is to a practice objectionable to him.

It is a doubtful tribute to the resilience of the human mind and its capacity for irrationality that this doctrine of a cultural realm, separate or separable from man, where invisible strings are pulled to make the human puppets dance, is embraced mainly by materialists who, because they hesitate to grant man too much in the way of will, creativity, and control, are sure they constitute a bulwark against mysticism and supernaturalism. But they have managed to develop their own up-dated brand of vision experience and have been permitted to gaze on a shadow world in which cultural ideas and artifacts jostle each other, breed, take direction, and determine man's course. In this doctrine of an order external to man, which nevertheless rules the affairs of man, we anthropologists meet two very old acquaintances, animism and animatism. The denizens of the domain over which they preside have been known by many names. It does not disguise them too much to give them sonorous scientific labels now. If they exist apart from man, are not subject to man's control, and yet are considered to be essential to man's existence and to be the arbiter of his future, we can be sure they are the same elusive spirits that will finally have to be caught and restored to us if we are ever to call our souls our own.

When cultural determinists portray the molding influence of a culture on its carriers, the culture is invariably represented as something monolithic and undeviating, and one would think, from the uniform picture drawn of them, that people roll from the relationship like pieces of dough stamped out by a cookie cutter. Where is this culture of such uniformity of practice or person? I have carried on research in so-called simple hunting and gathering cultures, and I have found that they permit many different constellations of activity and interest. Culture is to be thought of less as a rigid cast than as a plastic border against which men strain.

Some of the proofs offered in support of the overwhelming force of culture on the individual—for instance, that he speaks a language also spoken by others—seem naive indeed. One has to have points of reference in respect to other people to be significantly and understandably different from them. There is no need to press for individuality in a state of anarchy. Those things that we all do in much the same way to initiate communications, to facilitate movement, to avoid friction when nothing important is at stake, lie at the peripheries of culture, not at its heart. And these are ordinarily what the cultural determinist fastens on to demonstrate that the human being has no choice and no effect. The fact



that a culture has a ground plan, a structure, and roles to be filled does not necessitate bloodless conformity. There are admirable and remiss husbands, fathers, teachers, students, and plumbers, as we all know. Even the roles change over time.

Let us return for a moment to the human being in cultural context. We have heard him referred to as the hapless recipient of the cultural impress. Either he does not protest or he protests in vain, we are told. In my opinion this assertion is just as oversimplified and unconvincing as the depiction of the irresistible cultural juggernaut. Unless they are informed of it by an anthropologist, human beings seldom are aware that they have a culture and that they are supposed to enact and re-enact its terms. What they are really trying to do is to live as fully and as well as they can. The symbols, tools, and understandings that constitute the culture act in a multiple capacity for the human being. They acquaint him with the ordinary possibilities. This the cultural determinist understands. They indicate to him the outer limits of permissible conduct. This, too, the cultural determinist understands and even exaggerates. They provide him with materials and avenues by means of which he can fashion something personal and unique for himself. But this idea, that man manipulates and uses his culture for his own ends quite as much as he is subject to it, the cultural determinist resists and ignores. And because he does so, much of the richest data of anthropology passes by him, unrecognized and unappreciated. But this is the theater of our most varied and probing activities. It may bring the painter to New York City, the moon-faced girl to Hollywood, and the adventurous into anthropology. One man uses his work as an escape from his family, and another his family as an escape from his work. Theoretically, the political dimension is there for all; but one man votes regularly, another doesn't even bother to vote, and a third resolves to try to make a career of politics. Even as every Indian cook has a favorite combination of spices that marks her culinary efforts, each of us savors life through culture in a somewhat different way. Sometimes the taste is bitter indeed, but I would rather see a man make a wry face and try another condiment than see him become the faceless robot that some would prefer him to be.

"But," it may be asked, "isn't it true that, although man experiences and uses culture differentially, culture can be studied separately from him in its own right? Cannot grammar, for instance, be studied quite apart from the people who respond to its rules when they speak?" This is more apparent than true. We forget that every grammar was worked out in a human context and implies that human context. How did we come to know that one form connotes a command and another a plea? The symbols themselves tell us nothing; neither are the regularities revealing. It is only because we have some reason to think that men will

respond in the appropriate manner if these forms are used that we dare speak confidently of them. The human being and human reaction are always inferred. Nor can these forms be taken for granted; there is a continuous test in the human environment of any grammar which still has speakers, and we know that both the meanings and forms change over time.

The subject matter of cultural anthropology began to accumulate when man invented the first elements of culture many hundreds of thousands of years ago. Man and culture have coexisted ever since. The impress of each is on the other. They are not found in isolation from each other, and they are so interdependent that it is doubtful that they can be entirely extricated from each other either for research purposes or in the process of living. Those who suppose that they can consistently study man without reference to culture, or culture without reference to man, are about a million and a half years too late. The arguments over how many geniuses culture can juggle on the head of a pin, or the debate over the contributions of this individual or that individual, are pathetic non sequiturs. How will you distribute your praise or blame among the 75,000 generations of man? Culture is the work of humanity; we have the impression that it is autonomous only because it is anonymous. It is the story, not of impersonal forces or prime movers and shakers, but of countless millions, each of whom has left a trace. Our subject is the study of *man*, of the human being, in every possible cultural context. If we need a word for this, perhaps we could call it "humanology," for the study of the human being includes the study of his culture.

With over 200 years of the industrial revolution behind us and the multiplying might of the new technology before us, it becomes increasingly difficult for some of us to believe that we still control our tools and are not their blind servants. Perhaps we need to be reminded of the words of Lewis Mumford, a wise and witty man who wrote, "If you fall in love with a machine there is something wrong with your love-life. If you worship a machine there is something wrong with your religion."

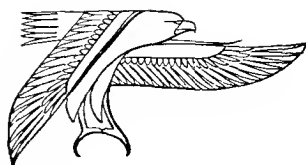
If it is difficult to refrain from adulation of the machine, it is very easy in these times to lose confidence in man, who has limped along from war to war, from crisis to crisis, and from moral dilemma to moral dilemma. The contempt of man for himself and his kind has its manifestations today in political life, in philosophy, in art, and in all the intellectual and practical reaches of our life. It has both direct and symbolic expression. In anthropology it has taken the form of doctrines of the separation of man from his works and of his subordination to technologically shaped culture. If this shows little faith in man's capabilities, it at least puts him beyond responsibility or censure for his fate. It makes of him the grey wake of an impersonal technological wave.

I worry about this general trend and the counterfeit relief it brings. And I know that I am not alone in this. Not long ago, when Bernard Malamud was named to the National Book Award, he said in his acceptance address:

I am quite tired of the colossally deceitful devaluation of man in this day; for whatever explanation: that life is cheap amid a prevalence of wars; or because we are drugged by totalitarian successes into a sneaking belief in their dehumanizing processes; or tricked beyond self-respect by the values of the creators of our own thing-ridden society; . . . or because, having invented the means of his extinction, man values himself less for it and lives in daily dread that he will in a fit of passion, or pique or absentmindedness, achieve his end. Whatever the reason, his fall from grace in his eyes is betrayed in the words he has invented to describe himself as he is now: fragmented, abbreviated, other-directed, organizational, atonymous man, a victim, in the words that are used to describe him, of a kind of synecdochic irony, the part for the whole. The devaluation exists because he accepts it without protest.

I hope that we will not accept without protest any shallow, mechanical, and cynical assessment of man. I hope that any necessary protest we make will take the form, in our professional work, of maintaining the human being in his cultural undertakings as a central subject of interest and investigation. We shall want to make statistical studies. We shall want to make comparative studies. We shall want to learn as much as we can about culture. We shall seek and apply improved methods. But in whatever we do we shall make it clear that we are men, not computers, and that the primary concern of an anthropologist is with the human being in relation to his cultural creations and not with his machines alone.

# 3 Man's Control Over Civilization: An Anthropocentric Illusion



Leslie A. White

ALTHOUGH THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY MORRIS OPLER IN THE PRECEDING selection would be objected to in part by many anthropologists, some would take blanket exception. Among those who look askance at positive statements of the role of human beings in determining directions of cultural developments none are more outspoken or articulate than the author of this article. We have already encountered Leslie White in Volume I. One of his pieces (I:3) explained the developments antecedent to cultural anthropology itself. This he did in such a way as not to emphasize the men whose thought contributed to the emergence of the discipline. Instead he discussed the cultural conditions under which the scope of science broadened to include phenomena whose effects play increasingly significant and intimate roles in the determination of human behavior. The key concept in this approach is the symbol, as it was analyzed for us by White (I:23).

One obvious problem that emerges from acceptance of cultural

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The author (b. 1900) is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Michigan. A major defender of evolutionary theory in anthropology when most voices were raised in opposition, White has had the rare pleasure of seeing his once unpopular views taken up by many younger anthropologists. The author is a painstaking ethnographer and specialist on the Pueblo Indians of the American Southwest. In addition to *The Science of Culture* and several monographs on the Pueblos of San Felipe, Santo Domingo and Santa Ana, he has written on Lewis Henry Morgan, a founder of scientific anthropology. White's latest books are *The Evolution of Culture* (1959) and *The Social Organization of Ethnological Theory* (1966).

*determinism is how to deal with the fatalism that would seem sure to follow. If man can do nothing to alter his future, will he do nothing? White faces this question in the course of his article; the reader will have to judge for himself the effectiveness of his arguments.*

*Given the philosophical importance of the previous problem, there is another that pervades White's approach to culture and which has been even more provocative for anthropologists. When White insists that culture be understood in terms of culture, he is in some ways running counter to a major impulse of science which is to explain complex phenomena in the simplest terms, reducing levels if possible. Some reductionisms are palpably false and easy to dispense with: the attempt to explain culture in terms of race is one anthropologically important example. Yet reductionism is not by itself a methodological error; it may be the very essence of scientific method. For example, as long as biologists handle life as something special and mysterious, something only remotely connected to the phenomena of physics and chemistry, little progress was made in understanding its basic nature. When the biochemists began to apply essentially reductionist theories to the problem of life a great breakthrough resulted. Note, however, White's consistency. His definition of the symbol leads him to make a sharp, qualitative break between cultural and all other forms of behavior (see I:3). Without pretending that the answer to this perplexing question is to be found in these Readings, it should be noted that other selections (especially the next one, II:4) also discuss it.*

The belief that man controls his civilization is widespread and deeply rooted. Customs and institutions, tools and machines, science, art, and philosophy are but man's creations and are therefore here only to do his bidding. It lies within man's power, therefore, to chart his course as he pleases, to mold civilization to his desires and needs. At least so he fondly believes.

Thus we find a distinguished British scientist, the late Sir James Jeans, assuring us that

We no longer believe that human destiny is a plaything for spirits, good and evil, or for the machinations of the Devil. There is nothing to prevent our making the earth a paradise again—except ourselves. The scientific age has dawned, and we recognize that man himself is the master of his fate, the captain of his soul. He controls the course of his ship, and so, of course, is free to navigate it into fair waters or foul, or even to run it on the rocks.

Mr. Stanley Field, president of the Chicago Natural History Museum, appeals to anthropologists in espousing free will:

But if we listen to the anthropologists, who can scientifically demonstrate that it is not color of skin, or type of hair or features, or difference of religion, that creates problems between peoples, but factors for which man is responsible

and which he can control or change if he will, then we shall at least come within sight of that better world which we now realize we must achieve if we are not finally to perish as victims of our own perversity.

Professor Lewis G. Westgate tells us that man can "take the problem of his future in hand and solve it. . . . The mind that can weigh the infinitely distant stars . . . track down the minute carriers of disease . . . dig the Panama Canal . . . can solve its social problems when and if it decides to do so."

It would seem that the salvation of an earlier era has become the social reconstruction of today: we can achieve it if we will; if we fail, it is because of our "perversity."

When, however, we look for examples of man's control over culture, we begin first to wonder, then to doubt. We shall not begin our inquiry by asking if two world wars in one generation are evidence of planning or perversity, or whether Germany and Japan were crushed and Soviet Russia made dominant in Eurasia in accordance with a far-sighted plan or as a result of blindness and folly. We shall start with something much more modest. During the past century we have witnessed attempts to control tiny and relatively insignificant segments of our culture, such as spelling, the calendar, and the system of weights and measures, to name but a few. There have been repeated and heroic attempts to simplify spelling and make it more rational, to devise a more rational calendar, and to adopt an ordered system of weights and measures instead of the cumbersome, illogical agglomeration of folk measurements we now use. But what successes can we point to? Reform in spelling has been negligible. We have succeeded to a considerable extent but not wholly in eliminating the *u* from such words as *honor*. But to do away with silent letters, such as the *b* in *lamb*, is too big a mountain for us to move. And such spellings and pronunciations as *rough*, *cough*, *dough*, and *through* are much too strong to yield to our puny efforts. It usually takes a great political and social upheaval to effect a significant change in spelling or a calendrical system as the French and Bolshevik revolutions have made clear. And as for the metric system, it has found a place among the little band of esoterics in science, but yards, ounces, rods, pints, and furlongs still serve—awkwardly and inefficiently—the layman.

We begin to wonder. If we are not able to perform such tiny and insignificant feats as eliminating the *b* from *lamb*, or modifying our calendar, how can we hope to construct a new social order on a worldwide scale?

Let us look about us further. Men and women are forever contending with fashions. Man perennially rebels against his attire. It is often uncomfortable, injurious to the health at times, and, some men think, the ordinary costume is unaesthetic, the formal attire ridiculous. But

what can he do? He must wear his coat and tie no matter how hot the weather. He is not permitted to wear pink or blue shoes. And as for "evening clothes"—he must submit to them or stay home. Man's vaunted control over civilization is not particularly conspicuous in this sector.

But if man is helpless, woman is an abject slave, in the grip of fashion. She must submit to any change, no matter how fantastic or ugly. To be sure, she may not realize that the new designs are fantastic and ugly at the time; "the latest style" can becloud a woman's judgment. But one has only to browse through an album of old snapshots to realize that beauty, grace, and charm do not dominate the course of fashion.

And as for women's skirts! First they are short; then they are long. A distinguished anthropologist, Professor A. L. Kroeber, of the University of California, has made a very interesting and revealing study of the dimensions of women's dresses over a considerable period of time. He found that "the basic dimensions of modern European feminine dress alternate with fair regularity between maxima and minima which in most cases average about fifty years apart so that the full-wave length of their periodicity is around a century." The rhythms are regular and uniform. Women have nothing to say about it. Even the designers and creators must conform to the curve of change. We find no control by man—or woman—here, only an inexorable and impersonal trend. When a maximum point on the curve is reached, the trend is reversed and skirts lengthen or shorten as the case may be. Women are helpless; they can do nothing but follow the trend. When the curve ascends they must shorten their dresses; when it descends, they must lengthen them. It may seem remarkable that a great class of citizens who cannot even control the dimensions of their own skirts will nevertheless organize themselves into clubs to administer the affairs of the world. We shall return to this point later.

Few men would undertake to repair an automobile or a radio without some understanding of its mechanism. We tend more and more nowadays to leave medicine and surgery to those who know how. Knowledge and skill are required even to make good pies or home brew. But in matters of society and culture everyone feels qualified to analyze, diagnose, and prescribe. It is one of the premises of democracy that not only do the people rule, but they have the requisite knowledge and understanding to do it effectively. In matters political, one man's view is as good as another's.

When, however, we examine the knowledge and understanding with which the affairs of the nation are administered, we begin again to wonder. We find the most august authorities espousing different and even contradictory views on such subjects as inflation, the function of

labor leaders, the divorce rate, the popularity of crooners, and so on. This is a picture of the anarchy of ignorance.

When we turn from matters of national proportions, such as the cause of inflation, to lesser problems, we are not always reassured. Does capital punishment diminish the number of murders? Does the use of alcohol affect the divorce rate? Why do people keep dogs? They are noisy, dirty, unhealthful, useless, and expensive. To say that they are kept because people like them is merely to phrase the problem in a different form. Why don't they "like" raccoons? They are cute, cleanly in their habits, and very amiable.

The fact is we don't really know very much about the civilization we live in. Let us take one of the simplest and most elementary questions imaginable: Why does our society prohibit polygamy? Other societies permit plural mates, and Western Europe once did also. But now we feel very strongly about it. We will put a man in prison for years if he takes unto himself more than one wife at one time. His wives may be perfectly satisfied with the arrangement and he may have injured no one. Yet we put him in gaol. Why? Why not have one more wife and one less schoolmarm? There are, to be sure, ready answers to these questions: polygamy is "wrong," "immoral," "undemocratic," etc. But practices are not prohibited because they are "wrong"; they are wrong because they have been prohibited. It is not wrong to buy and sell whisky now; it was while the Eighteenth Amendment was on the books. And as for democracy, we permit a man to have two yachts if he can afford them, why not two wives?

I know of no really adequate answer to this question in such literature of social science as I am acquainted with. As a matter of fact, the question is very seldom raised. I have looked for it in a great number of treatises on sociology and anthropology written during the past quarter century without finding it. Some social scientists of the latter half of the nineteenth century tried to explain the prohibition of polygamy, but we cannot accept their conclusions.

The fact is we are ignorant. We do not know the solution to such an elementary problem as singular or plural mates. And in our day, we have not reached the point of asking such questions, to say nothing of answering them. As Archibald MacLeish has said, "We know all the answers, but we have not yet asked the questions." Over half a century ago the great French savant, Emile Durkheim, commented upon the immaturity of social science as follows:

In the present state of the science we really do not even know what are the principal social institutions, such as the state, or the family; what is the right of property or contract. . . . We are almost completely ignorant of the factors on which they depend . . . ; we are scarcely beginning to shed even a glimmer of



light on some of these points. Yet one has only to glance through the works on sociology to see how rare is the appreciation of this ignorance and these difficulties.

Despite the progress that has been made since *The Rules of Sociological Method* was written, this statement has a certain relevance today. If the science of society and civilization is still so immature as to be unable to solve such a tiny and elementary problem as the prohibition of polygamy, where are the knowledge and understanding requisite to planning a new social system, to constructing a new world order? One would not expect a savage craftsman, whose best tools are made of chipped flint, to design and build a locomotive.

Let us have a look at this civilization man thinks he controls. The first thing we notice is its antiquity. There is not part of it, whether it be technology, institutions, science, or philosophy, that does not have its roots in the remote past. The lens of the new 200-inch telescope, for example, is made of glass. Glass emerged from the manufacture of faïence in ancient Egypt, which in turn originated apparently as a by-product of burning bricks and pottery, which followed the use of sundried brick and, earlier, mud daubs of Neolithic, or even Paleolithic, huts. The United Nations can be traced back to primitive tribal councils and beyond. Modern mathematics goes back to counting on one's fingers, and so on. Culture is as old as man himself. It had its beginnings a million-odd years ago when man first started to use articulate speech, and it has continued and developed to the present day. Culture is a continuous, cumulative, and progressive affair.

Everyone—every individual, every generation, every group—has, since the very earliest period of human history, been born into a culture, a civilization, of some sort. It might be simple, crude, and meager, or it might be highly developed. But all cultures, whatever their respective degrees of development, have technologies (tools, machines), social systems (customs, institutions), beliefs (lore, philosophy, science), and forms of art. This means that when a baby is born into a cultural milieu, he will be influenced by it. As a matter of fact, his culture will determine how he will think, feel, and act. It will determine what language he will speak, what clothes if any he will wear, what gods he will believe in, and how he will marry, select and prepare his foods, treat the sick, and dispose of the dead. What else *could* one do but react to the culture that surrounds him from birth to death? No people makes its own culture; it inherits it ready-made from its ancestors or borrows it from its neighbors.

It is easy enough for man to believe that he has made his culture, each generation contributing its share, and that it is he who controls and directs its course through the ages. Does he not chip the arrowheads and

stone axes, build carts and dynamos, coin money and spend it, elect presidents and depose kings, compose symphonies and carve statues, worship gods and wage war? But one cannot always rely upon the obvious. It was once obvious that the earth remained stationary while the sun moved; anyone could see that for himself. We are now approaching a point in modern thought where we are beginning to suspect that it is not man who controls culture but the other way around. The feat of Copernicus in dispelling the geocentric illusion more than four hundred years ago is being duplicated in our day by the culturologist who is dissipating the illusion that man controls his culture.

Although it is man who chips arrowheads, composes symphonies, etc., we cannot explain culture merely by saying that "man produced it." There is not a single question that we would want to ask about culture than can be answered by saying, "Man did thus and so." We want to know why culture developed as it did; why it assumed a great variety of forms while preserving at the same time a certain uniformity; why the rate of cultural change has accelerated. We want to know why some cultures have money and slaves and others do not; why some have trial by jury, others ordeal by magic; why some have kings, others chiefs or presidents; why some use milk, others loathe it; why some permit, others prohibit, polygamy. To explain all these things by saying, "Man wanted them that way," is of course absurd. A device that explains everything explains nothing.

Before we go very far, we discover that we must disregard man entirely in our efforts to explain cultural growth and cultural differences—in short, culture or civilization as a whole. Man may be regarded as a constant so far as cultural change is concerned. Man is one species, and, despite differences of skin, eye, and hair color, shape of head, lips, and nose, stature, etc., which after all are superficial, he is highly uniform in such fundamental features as brain, bone, muscle, glands, and sense organs. And he has undergone no appreciable evolutionary change during the past 50,000 years at least. We may, therefore, regard man as a constant, both with regard to the races extant today and with regard to his ancestors during the past tens of thousands of years. Man has a certain structure and certain functions; he has certain desires and needs. These are related to culture, of course, but only in a *general*, not a specific, way. We may say that culture as a whole serves the needs of man as a species. But this does not and cannot help us at all when we try to account for the variations of specific cultures. You cannot explain variables by appeal to a constant. You cannot explain the vast range of cultural variation by invoking man, a biological constant. In England in A.D. 1500 there was one type of culture; in Japan, another. Neither culture can be explained in terms of the physical type associated with it. Culture underwent change in England between A.D. 1500 and 1900,

as it did in Japan. But these changes cannot be explained by pointing to the inhabitants in each case; they did not change. Plainly, we cannot explain cultures in terms of Man.

Nor can cultural differences be explained in terms of environment. Quite apart from the difficulty of accounting for differences in musical styles, forms of writing, codes of etiquette, rules of marriage, mortuary rites, etc., in terms of environment, we soon discover that even economic, industrial, and social systems cannot be so explained. The environment of central Europe so far as climate, flora, fauna, topography, and mineral resources are concerned has remained constant for centuries. The culture of the region, however, has varied enormously. Here again we see the fallacy of explaining the variable by appeal to a constant.

If, then, we cannot explain cultures in terms of race or physical type, or in terms of psychological processes, and if appeal to environment is equally futile, how *are* they to be accounted for and made intelligible to us?

There seems to be only one answer left, and that is fairly plain—after one becomes used to it, at least. Culture must be explained in terms of culture. As we have already noted, culture is a continuum. Each trait or organization of traits, each state of development, grows out of an earlier cultural situation. The steam engine can be traced back to the origins of metallurgy and fire. International cartels have grown out of all the processes of exchange and distribution since the Old Stone Age and before. Our science, philosophy, religion, and art have developed out of earlier forms. Culture is a vast stream of tools, utensils, customs, and beliefs that are constantly interacting with one another, creating new combinations and syntheses. New elements are added constantly to the stream; obsolete traits drop out. The culture of today is but the cross section of this stream at the present moment, the resultant of the age-old process of interaction, selection, rejection, and accumulation that has preceded us. And the culture of tomorrow will be but the culture of today plus one more day's growth. The numerical coefficient of today's culture may be said to be 365,000,000 (i.e., a million years of days); that of tomorrow,  $365,000,000 + 1$ . The culture of the present was determined by the past, and the culture of the future will be but a continuation of the trend of the present. Thus in a very real sense, *culture makes itself*. At least, if one wishes to explain culture scientifically, he must proceed *as if* culture made itself, *as if* man had nothing to do with the determination of its course or content. Man must *be* there, of course, to make the existence of the culture process possible. But the nature and behavior of the process itself is self-determined. It rests upon its own principles; it is governed by its own laws.

Thus, culture makes man what he is and at the same time makes

itself. An Eskimo, Bantu, Tibetan, Swede, or American is what he is, he thinks, feels, and acts as he does because his culture influences—"stimulates"—him in such a way as to evoke these responses. The Eskimo or American has had no part in producing the culture into which he was thrust at birth. It was already there; he could not escape it; he could do nothing but react to it, and that on its own terms. The English language, the Christian religion, our political institutions, our mills, mines, factories, railroads, telephones, armies, navies, race tracks, dance halls, and all the other thousands of things that comprise our civilization are here in existence today. They have weight, mass, and momentum. They cannot be made to disappear by waving a wand, nor can their structure and behavior be altered by an act of will. We must come to terms with them as we find them today. And they will be tomorrow what their trend of development in the past dictates. We can only trot along with them, hoping to keep up.

Man has long cherished the illusion of omnipotence. It is flattering and comforting to his ego. In days gone by, man has believed that he could control the weather; countless primitive peoples have had rituals for making rain, stilling high winds, or averting storms. Many have had ceremonies by means of which the course of the sun in the heavens could be "controlled." With the advance of science, however, man's faith in his omnipotence has diminished. But he still believes that he can control his civilization.

The philosophy of science—of cause-and-effect relationships, of determinism—has been firmly established in the study of physical phenomena. It is well entrenched in the biological field also. Psychology may have demonstrated the operation of the principle of cause and effect, of determinism, in mental processes, and may have dispelled the notion of free will for the *individual*. but social science is still so immature as to permit one to find refuge in a collective free will. As Professor A. L. Kroeber has recently observed:

I suspect that the resistance [to the thesis of cultural determinism] goes back to the common and deeply implanted assumption that our wills are free. As this assumption has had to yield ground elsewhere, it has taken refuge in the collective, social, and historical sphere. Since the chemists, physiologists, and psychologists have unlimbered their artillery, the personal freedom of the will is thankless terrain to maintain. Culture they have not yet attacked; so that becomes a refuge. Whatever the degree to which we have ceased to assert being free agents as individuals, in the social realm we can still claim to shape our destinies. The theologian is piping pretty small, but the social reformer very loud. We are renouncing the kingdom of heaven, but going to establish a near-millennium on earth. Our personal wills may be determined, but by collectivizing them we can still have social freedom.

Primitive man could believe that he could control the weather only because he was ignorant; he knew virtually nothing of meteorology. And today it is only our profound and comprehensive ignorance of the nature of culture that makes it possible for us to believe that we direct and control it. As man's knowledge and understanding grew in meteorology, his illusion of power and control was dissipated. And as our understanding of culture increases, our illusion of control will languish and disappear. As Durkheim once observed, "As far as social facts are concerned, we still have the mentality of primitives."

Needless to say, this is not the view taken by many today who look to science for our salvation. Far from expecting belief in our ability to control to diminish with the advance of social science, many people expect just the reverse. It has become the fashion these days to declare that if only our social sciences were as advanced as the physical sciences, then we could control our culture as we now control the physical forces of nature. The following quotation from a letter published in *Science* is a conservative statement of this point of view:

For if, by employing the scientific method, men can come to understand and control the atom, there is reasonable likelihood that they can in the same way learn to understand and control human group behavior. . . . It is quite within reasonable probability that social science can provide these techniques [i.e., for "keeping the peace"] if it is given anything like the amount of support afforded to physical science in developing the atomic bomb.

The premise underlying this view is unsound. It assumes that wars are caused, or at least made possible, by ignorance and the lack of social control that goes with ignorance. It assumes that, given understanding through generous grants of funds to social scientists, wars could be prevented—the "peace could be kept." The lack of understanding and realism displayed here is pathetic. The instinct of self-preservation of a society that subsidized atom-bomb inventors rather than social scientists holding views such as these is a sure one. Wars are not caused by ignorance, nor can "the peace be kept" by the findings of social scientists. Wars are struggles between social organisms—called *nations*—for survival; struggles for the possession and use of the resources of the earth; for fertile fields; coal, oil, and iron deposits; for uranium mines; for seaports and waterways; for markets and trade routes; for military bases. No amount of understanding will alter or remove the basis of this struggle, any more than an understanding of the ocean's tides will diminish or terminate their flow.

But the fallacy of assuming that we can increase and perfect our control over civilization through social science is even more egregious than we have indicated. To call upon science, the essence of which is acceptance of the principles of cause and effect and determinism, to

support a philosophy of free will is fairly close to the height of absurdity. Verily, Science has become the modern magic! The belief that man could work his will upon nature and man alike *if only he had the right formulas* once flourished in primitive society as magic. It is still with us today, but we now call it science.

No amount of development of the social sciences would increase or perfect man's control over civilization by one iota. In the man-culture system, man is the dependent, culture the independent, variable. What man thinks, feels, and does is determined by his culture. And culture behaves in accordance with its own laws. A mature development of social science would only make this fact clear.

The philosophy of free will and omnipotence is rampant in the field of education. "Educators," high-school principals, commencement orators, and others never seem to tire of telling the world that its salvation lies in education. Naturally, one does not expect meat packers to preach vegetarianism, and it is reasonable for educators to advocate schooling and to urge the support of schools and colleges. But one could wish that they would place their propaganda on a somewhat higher intellectual plane; after all, one expects more of educators than of vendors of soap and cigarettes. The fact is, however, that the appeals and claims of educators are seldom more realistic than soap and cigarette ads. Education will no more cure the ills of society than cigarette X will soothe the nerves, or soap Y beautify the hands, of the user. As a matter of fact, the premise upon which the educator's claim rests is, if anything, less sound than the premise of the advertisements, for these are at least relevant, whether sound or unsound, whereas the educator's premise is hardly even relevant. The soap or cigarette will certainly have *some* effect upon the user. But education does not, strictly speaking, have an effect upon culture at all; *it is a part of it*. Education, whether formalized in the classroom or informal in the course of everyday living, *is one of the processes of culture*: it is the means of transmitting culture from one individual, one group or one generation, to another. Being a process *within* the system that is culture, it is therefore fallacious to think of it as acting upon culture from the outside. It is not people who control their culture through education; it is rather the other way around: *education is what culture is doing to people*, namely, equipping them with beliefs, ideals, codes of conduct, tools, utensils, machines, etc.—in short, determining how they shall think, feel, and behave.

The position taken here will of course be vigorously denied and opposed. People do not give up their illusions easily. As the distinguished anthropologist, A. L. Kroeber, has put it:

Our minds instinctively resist the first shock of the recognition of a thing [cultural determinism] so intimately woven into us and yet so far above and so uncontrollable by our wills. We feel driven to deny its reality, to deny even

the validity of dealing with it as an entity; just as men at large have long and bitterly resented admitting the existence of purely automatic forces and systems in the realm that underlies and carries and makes possible the existence of our personalities: the realm of nature.

A common reaction—verbal reflex—to the theory of cultural determinism is to brand it “fatalistic” or “defeatist.” The choice of these words is significant. Why is it that, when one employs the principle of cause and effect in the realm of physical and chemical phenomena, no one cries “fatalism,” but the instant one applies it to human cultural phenomena this accusation leaps forth? Why is it that an admission of our inability to control the weather brings forth no charge of “defeatism,” whereas this reproach is promptly leveled against anyone who recognizes man’s inability to control the course of civilization?

The reason is fairly plain. “Fatalism” implies free will; “defeatism,” omnipotence. When atoms, cells, or tissues behave in accordance with their nature and properties, no one calls it fatalistic because no one expects freedom of choice and action of them. But when one asserts that cultural phenomena have a nature of their own and consequently must behave in terms of their nature, the response is not an acceptance of the principle of cause and effect but a charge of “fatalism.”

To many educated minds [the great English anthropologist, E. B. Tylor, wrote many years ago], there seems something presumptuous and repulsive in the view that the history of mankind is part and parcel of the history of nature, that our thoughts, wills, and actions accord with laws as definite as those which govern the motion of waves, the combination of acids and bases, and the growth of plants. . . . If law is anywhere it is everywhere.

We have combined “a scientific realism, based on mechanism,” says Alfred North Whitehead, with “an unwavering belief in the world of men and of the higher animals as being composed of *self-determining organisms*” (emphasis ours). He feels that this “radical inconsistency” is responsible for “much that is half-hearted and wavering in our civilization. It . . . enfeebles . . . [thought] by reason of the inconsistency lurking in the background.”

Implicit in the charge of “fatalism” and “defeatism” is the further notion of refutation. To brand a view “fatalistic” is, to many minds, to call it false as well. “Cultural determinism is fatalistic and therefore false,” is about the way the reasoning would go if it were made explicit. “How can determinism exist?” is the question that is implied but unspoken. “Determinism is unthinkable.” And so it is to one possessed by a philosophy of free will. We find this point of view rather well expressed by Lawrence K. Frank in a recent article, “What is Social Order?”

Perhaps the major obstacle we face today, therefore, is this essentially defeatist tradition expressed in the various conceptions of social order described earlier, as above and beyond all human control. . . . In this situation, therefore, we can and we must find the courage to view social order as that which must be achieved by man himself.

Of course man can "find the courage" to view social order as something "that must be achieved by himself." It does not take courage to do this, however; what is required is ignorance and hope. "Must find the courage," "must be achieved by man himself," is hardly the language of science. It is, rather, exhortation and rhetoric—of a type with which we have long been familiar: "if we will but purpose in our hearts. . . ."

No doubt the first to question man's control over the weather, the first to claim that the winds will blow, the rain and snow fall, the seasons come and go, in accordance with their own nature rather than in obedience to man's wish and will expressed in spell and ritual, were accused of "fatalism" and "defeatism," if, indeed, they were not dealt with more harshly. But, in time, we have come to accept our impotence in this regard and to become reconciled to it. If it be argued that man cannot control the weather because that is a part of the external world, whereas culture, being man-made, is subject to his control, it must be pointed out that the exact opposite is the case. It is precisely in the realm of the external world that man's control is possible. He can harness the energies of rivers, fuels, and atoms because he, as one of the forces of nature, lies *outside* their respective systems and can therefore act upon them. But man, as an animal organism, as a species, lies *within* the man-culture system, and there he is the dependent, not the independent, variable; his behavior is merely the function of his culture, not its determinant. Both theoretically and practically, therefore, it is possible for man to exert more control over the weather than over culture, for he can exert *some* control over the former even now (dispel fog on airfields) and he may increase this control in the future. But he exerts no control whatever over his culture, and theoretically there is no possibility of his ever doing so.

The usual reactions to this manifesto of cultural determinism are as unwarranted as are the assumptions of free will, from which, of course, these responses flow. After expostulating on the theme of "fatalism" and "defeatism," the conventional protest goes on to demand: "What is the use then of our efforts? Why should we try to do anything to improve our lot if we have no control over our culture? Why not just sit back and let the evolutionary process take care of everything? Of what use could a science of culture possibly be to us if control lies beyond our



grasp? What good is an understanding of culture if there is nothing we can do about it?"

These questions are naive and betray a lack of understanding of what the cultural determinist—the culturologist—is trying to say. The determinist does not assert that man is irrelevant to the culture process. He knows full well that the contrary is the case; that man is an absolute prerequisite to it; that without man there could be no culture. He realizes very clearly the essential role that man plays in the system that is man-and-culture. What the culturologist contends is that in this system the human organism is not the determinant; that the behavior of the culture process cannot be explained in terms of this organism but only in terms of the culture itself; that the growth and changes among the Indo-European languages, for example, cannot be accounted for in terms of man's nerves, muscles, senses, or organs of speech; or in terms of his hopes, needs, fear, or imagination. Language must be explained in terms of language.

But to turn to some of the specific questions with which dissatisfaction with the philosophy of determinism is expressed: In the first place, we cannot "just sit back" and let the evolutionary process take care of all our problems. While we live we are confronted by our culture and we must come to terms with it. Even just sitting back, incubating a case of dementia praecox, is "doing something about it." So is committing suicide; as a matter of fact, suicide rates for various societies provide excellent indexes of cultural determinism. In some societies, the rate is high; in others, suicide is virtually nonexistent. This is not because suicide determinants are more abundant in the chromosomes of some populations than of others. It is due to the fact that the cultural determinants vary: hara-kiri is something that a culture does to an organism that, of its own nature, tends to persevere in that form of motion we call "life." It is obvious that we cannot avoid reacting to our culture.

To assume that the process of cultural evolution will take care of everything without effort on our part is of course absurd, and constitutes no part of the determinist's philosophy. Of course we must exert ourselves while we live, we cannot do otherwise. But the question is not "Who does the work, ourselves or cultural evolution?" It is obvious that the energy is expended by or through human beings. The question is, *What determines the nature, the form and content of this expression of energy in the culture process, the human organism or the extrasomatic culture?* The answer is of course fairly obvious—after a small amount of reflection. Let us consider two groups of human organisms, A and B. Group A raises taro, catches fish, carves wood, makes no pottery, speaks a Polynesian language, has chiefs but no currency, is nonliterate, drinks kava, is greatly concerned with genealogy, and so on. Group B mines coal and iron, speaks Welsh, imports its food from the outside, uses

money, is literate, drinks ale, etc. Now the question is, Why does each group behave as it does? Is it that one group of organisms possesses traits or characteristics—genes, instincts, or psychological tendencies—that cause them to drink kava rather than ale? This is, of course, ridiculous; the one group of organisms is fundamentally like the other biologically. It is obvious that each group of organisms behaves as it does because each is reacting to a particular set of cultural stimuli. It is obvious also that a consideration of the human organism is totally irrelevant to the question. Why is one group stimulated by one set of stimuli rather than by another? This is a cultural historical question, not a biological or psychological one. So, one is not so silly as to say, “Why should we mine coal or catch fish? Let our culture do it.” The question is not Who mines the coal? but What is the determinant of this behavior? And, the culturologist points out the obvious: the culture is the determinant.

The reaction of many sincere, altruistic and conscientious people, upon being told that it is not they who control their culture and direct its course, is “Why then should we try to do good, to better our lot and that of mankind?” We have answered this question in part already. In the first place one cannot avoid trying to do something. As long as one accepts life and is willing to continue with it, he must exert himself. “Trying” is merely the name we give to the effort exerted in the process of living. To strive for this or that, therefore, is inseparable from our lives. But *what* one strives for and *how* his effort is expressed is determined by his culture. For example, the goal of one people may be eternal life in heaven, for which their terrestrial existence is but a preparation. The goal of another might be the good life “here below.” One group may deny the reality of sickness; another may admit its existence and try to combat it. One group may use charms and incantations; another, clinics and laboratories. Whatever the goal and whatever the means employed to reach it are matters determined by the culture of the group.

*But*, it should be pointed out with emphasis, this is not a philosophy of defeatism or hopelessness by any means. Least of all does it declare that one's efforts do not count. The fact that one's efforts to stamp out tuberculosis are culturally determined in no way minimizes the effort or the result. A life saved is a life saved. A letter written to a congressman has an *effect*, too, no matter what kind or how much. A resolution on world affairs passed by a woman's club has a real function in society, although it may be a very different one from that imagined by the good ladies. The question we raise is not one of the value of effort or whether effort has consequences. Human effort is just as real as anything in the realm of the geologist. And effort is followed by consequences, just as effect follows cause in physics or geology. Living human beings cannot help but exert themselves, and everything they do counts for something

in one way or another. Far from wishing to deny or ignore this, we wish to emphasize it. But this is not the question raised by the culturologist, the cultural determinist. What he claims is not that it is futile to try because what one does counts for nought, but that what one does, how he does it, and the end and purpose for which it is done is culturally determined, is determined by the culture of the group rather than by the free will of the individual or of the group. More than that, what a person or group desires is determined or at least defined by the culture, not by them. What constitutes the "good life" for any people is always culturally defined.

From the cultural determinist's point of view, human beings are merely the instruments through which cultures express themselves. A physician, saving lives each day, is an instrument through which certain cultural forces express themselves; if they were not there or if they were different, the organism in question would not be practicing medicine, or he would practice it in a different way. The gangster, evangelist, revolutionist, reformer, policeman, impoverished beggar, wealthy parasite, teacher, soldier, and shaman are likewise instruments of cultural action and expression; each is a type of primate organism grasped and wielded by a certain set of culture traits. It is only the inveterate habit of thinking anthropocentrically that makes this point of view seem strange or ridiculous.

But, granting that what we do counts even though it is culturally determined, of what use is it to develop a science of culture if we cannot control civilization or direct its course? We have a science of pathology in order to combat disease, sciences of physics and chemistry to control the external world. But if we do not control our culture and cannot ever hope to control it, of what use would a science of culture be? We might begin our reply to this question by asking, Of what value is it to know the temperature of a star a million light-years away? Questions such as these betray a limited understanding of science. Science is not primarily a matter of control in the sense of harnessing rivers with hydroelectric plants or constructing uranium piles. Science is a means of adjustment; control is but one aspect of adjustment. Man finds himself in a universe to which he must adjust if he is to continue to live in it. Mythology and science are means of adjustment; they are interpretations of the world in terms of which man behaves. There is, of course, a vast difference in terms of adjustment between a philosophy that interprets stars as a flock of snowbirds lost in the sky and one that measures their masses, distances, dimensions, and temperatures. This difference is a very practical one, too, in terms of the contribution that each philosophy makes to the security of life.

Our ancestors once thought they could control the weather, as contemporary savages still do. They finally outgrew this illusion, even

going so far as to outgrow calling the new view "fatalistic" and "defeatist." But we do not think a knowledge and an understanding of weather and climate useless. On the contrary, we are devoting more time and money to meteorology now than ever before. Here again we see the situation in terms of adjustment rather than *control*. We may not be able to control the weather, but adjust to it we must. And knowledge and understanding make for more effective and satisfying adjustments. It would be advantageous if we *could* control the weather. But if we cannot, then weather prediction is the next best thing. And for prediction we must have knowledge and understanding.

So it is with culture. We cannot control its course, but we can learn to predict it. As a matter of fact, we make predictions all the time, and many of them are quite accurate: wheat production, traffic fatalities, freight carloadings, births, exhaustion of oil reserves, and many other matters are already within the reach of limited but nevertheless valuable prediction. If our ability to predict were greatly increased by the development and maturation of a science of culture, the possibilities of a rational, effective, and humane adjustment between man and culture and between one cultural segment and another would be increased accordingly. If, for example, a science of culture could demonstrate that the trend of social evolution is toward larger political groupings, then the chances of making the futile attempt to restore or maintain the independence of small nations would be lessened. If the trend of cultural evolution is away from private property and free enterprise, why strive to perpetuate them? If it could be shown that international wars will continue as long as independent, sovereign nations exist, then certain delusions now popular would find less nourishment and support. The fact is that culture has been evolving as an unconscious, blind, bloody, brutal, tropismatic process so far. It has not yet reached the point where intelligence, self-consciousness, and understanding are very conspicuous. Our ignorance is still deep-rooted and widespread. We do not understand even some of the most elementary things—the prohibition of polygamy, for example. In short, we are so ignorant that we can still believe that it is we who make our culture and control its course.

This ignorance is not surprising, however. It has not been very long since we gave up burning witches, cudgeling hysterics to drive out demons, and other savage practices. Even in technology, which tends to outstrip the social and ideological sectors, we have surpassed the savage at two points—fire making and the use of the bow and arrow—only within the past century or two. Chemical matches are but a little more than a century old, and within the past hundred years the bow and arrow was used in bison hunting on the American plains in preference to the best firearms available at the time. It was only yesterday, culturologically speaking, that a small portion of mankind began to emerge from a con-

dition of savagery. For most of his career thus far man has subsisted wholly upon wild foods; less than 2 percent of human history, as a matter of fact, has elapsed since the origin of agriculture. Other significant indexes: some 0.7 percent of culture history since the beginning of metallurgy, 0.35 percent since the first alphabet, 0.033 percent since Galileo, 0.009 percent since the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, and only 0.002 percent since William Jennings Bryan and the Scopes trial. A mature, urbane, and rational civilization is not to be achieved in a mere million years from the anthropoid level.

It should be made clear that, if an adequate understanding should come about as a consequence of a science of culture, it would not have been "us" who achieved it but our culture. In the interaction of elements in the culture process, those traits less effective in providing adequate adjustment in terms of understanding and control are gradually relinquished and replaced by more effective traits. Thus, bronze axes replace stone axes, ikons and spells give way to laboratories and clinics, and, finally, a science of human culture begins to challenge the primitive philosophy of omnipotence and free will. The new science will of course have to prove its superiority over the older view, just as astronomy, chemistry, and medicine have in other sectors of experience. The success of science—the philosophy of materialism, of cause and effect, of determinism—the physical and biological sectors of experience encourages us greatly in the belief that this point of view and these techniques of interpretation will prove effective in the social sphere also.

Our role in this process is a modest one. Neither as groups nor as individuals do we have a choice of roles or of fates. Swedes are born into their culture just as Zulus, Tibetans, and Yankees are born into theirs. And each individual is thrust by birth into some particular place in the "magnetic field" of his culture, there to be molded by the particular organization of cultural influences that play upon him. Thus, he may have the belief that typhoid exists only in the mind, or is caused by witches or bacilli, thrust upon him—or "into his mind." He may be endowed with a belief in personal immortality, the efficacy of prayer, or the periodic law of Mendelyev. He may be inspired to preach the only true faith to the heathen in distant lands, or to wear out his life in a genetics laboratory, or to believe that "only saps work." To be sure, the response of the human organism to cultural stimulation will vary with the quality of the organism. Some will be silk purses; others, sow's ears. The order in which an organism undergoes experiences is important too; the influence of events, *a*, *b*, *c*, will not be the same as *a*, *c*, *b*. An experience will have one effect at fifteen; quite another at fifty. There is room, therefore, for almost infinite variety of permutation and combination in the experience of individual organisms.

Man discovers his place in the cosmos slowly and accepts it with ex-

treme reluctance. Time was when his solid earth was planted in the center, the sun and stars spread upon the vault of heaven, and men and gods together acted out the drama of life and death. It was all so compact, so familiar, so secure. Then it was that man, like God, could cry, "Let there be light," and there was light. Like God, too, man was "omnipotent," if, however, to a lesser degree. With his magic formulas, his spells, prayers, charms, and rituals, mighty man could control the weather, the seasons, and even enlist the gods in the service of man. Now it is different. Man finds himself but one of innumerable animal species crawling about on an insignificant planetary speck, fighting, feeding, breeding, dying. Once the child of God, he now finds himself an ex-ape. But he has acquired a new faculty, one unknown among all other species: articulate speech. As a consequence of this, a new way of life has been developed: culture. But this culture, this mass of extrasomatic tools, institutions, and philosophies, has a life and laws of its own. Man is just beginning to understand this.

Man is wholly at the mercy of external forces, astronomic and geologic. As a matter of fact, it is rather disconcerting to think of how narrow is the margin within which man lives. Change the temperature, velocity, rainfall, or atmosphere of the earth but a little and life would cease. It is a curious and, from a cosmic viewpoint, momentary, concatenation of circumstances that has made life possible. Man did long rebel against his dependence upon these outside forces; to be wholly at their mercy was unendurable. As a matter of fact, man has employed his precious and unique gift of speech more to deny the facts of his existence than to improve upon them. But a certain portion of the human race has come at last to accept our dependence upon nature and to try to make the most of it.

And so it is with culture. Belief in our omnipotence has, as Durkheim says, always been a source of weakness to us. But we are now discovering the true nature of culture and we can in time reconcile ourselves to this extrasomatic order as we have to the astronomic, geologic, and meteorologic orders. To give up magic and mythology, which promised much but yielded nothing—nothing but the soothing comfort of illusion—was a painful experience. But to receive and accept science and a technology that promises less but achieves a great deal is to reach a goal most men are loathe to lose. We may believe that knowledge and understanding of culture will make for a more satisfactory life, just as these traits have been of value in physics and biology. To be sure, understanding culture will not, as we have argued here, alter its course or change the "fate" that it has in store for us, any more than understanding the weather or the tides will change them. But as long as man remains an inquiring primate he will crave understanding. And a growing Science of Culture will provide him with it.

## 4 *The Superorganic: Science or Metaphysics?*<sup>1</sup>



David Kaplan

THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE AS "SUPERORGANIC," AS WE HAVE ALREADY learned (II:2), is about a century old, the term itself having been invented by Herbert Spencer. At its core is the conviction that explanations of natural phenomena have three intrinsic loci. The most basic of these and that which relates to the earliest appearing phenomena is the inorganic, which relates to generalizations about matter, energy and time. Sciences clustering around this level include physics, astronomy, major parts of chemistry and geology, and others. Emergent from the inorganic level and dependent on it, but requiring additional principles for the formulation of effective generalizations, are the phenomena of the organic level, which deal with life. The prime science of this level is biology, but there are many others, such as medicine, psychology, and such interstitial sciences as biochemistry, etc. Emergent from the biological level and dependent both on it and the primary inorganic level are the phenomena covered under the rubric of the superorganic.

<sup>1</sup> Professors George L. Cowgill, Robert A. Manners and Benson Saler read this paper at various stages in its preparation. I am grateful to them for their many helpful comments.

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*As seen from Opler's criticism (II:2), the mere concept of a superorganic is hotly disputed. One major dispute is over the issue of free will. Another concerns "reductionism" as the goal of scientific explanation. Exactly what reductionism is comprises one of the main subjects of Kaplan's article. It also discusses the free-will problem and various other difficulties that have been raised, coming to the methodologically elusive problem: Is the concept of a superorganic science or is it metaphysics?*

# I

Almost a century ago, E. B. Tylor in the opening chapter of his classic work *Primitive Culture* argued for the creation of a naturalistic and autonomous science of culture. During the intervening years a number of other writers—more or less echoing Tylor's plea—have attempted to set forth the case for the superorganic view of culture; which in turn has provoked a variety of rebuttals from the opposing camp. Indeed, few theoretical issues in anthropology have been perennially debated with quite the fervor that has been generated by this one.

By now the whole topic has received such a thorough working over that it would appear there is scarcely anything left to be said on the matter. In reviewing some of the literature of this logomachy, however, I have been struck by how large a portion of it has been couched in metaphysical terms: theoretical discussions dealing with the concept of culture have usually ended up as discussions about the ontological status of culture. A great deal of effort and philosophic ingenuity has gone into the exploration of such questions as: Is culture real or just an abstraction from reality? If real, then what is the nature of its reality and where does this reality have its locus? If an abstraction, then how can we speak of it as influencing the behavior of individuals? and so forth.

While all of these may be important questions in certain realms of philosophic discourse, as practicing anthropologists we need not await the resolution of ontological issues before getting down to the scientific business of the discipline, which I take to be to provide the best explanations we can of how cultural systems have come to be as they are and how they work. We can, in other words, separate methodological and epistemological questions from ontological ones. In fact, if it were not possible to make such a logical separation, and indeed if such a distinction had not been made long ago, the various scientific disciplines would still be branches of metaphysical philosophy. As Goldstein has aptly pointed out:

The term "electron" is frequently found in physical theory and it too has given rise to ontological questions. What is an electron? What is its status in the world? The realistic view holds that it is a tiny bit of something, so small that the human eye cannot detect its presence, which makes itself known by its



manifested effects. Phenomenalists say that it is senseless to talk of such bits, and that all one can possibly mean by the term "electron" are the so-called effects or manifestations. Whichever view one favors, the actual theoretical science is in no way affected, nor is it difficult for advocates of these metascientific interpretations to collaborate in specifically scientific work. And the objects of concern to other sciences are also amenable to both realistic and phenomenalistic interpretations without affecting the actual work of these sciences.

The following discussion is an attempt to reexamine the superorganic conception of culture in the light of the logic of scientific methodology. Put more specifically, the central problem of this paper is whether from the viewpoint of the logic of scientific explanation it makes any sense to speak of explaining "culture in terms of culture"; or whether, as we have so often been told, cultural phenomena must, in the final analysis, be explained in psychological terms. The crux of this issue, as I see it, hinges not upon a determination of the ontological structure of the world, but rather upon a formulation of those conditions under which one science is reducible to some other one, i.e., the logical and empirical requirements which must be satisfied if the laws and other theoretical statements of one discipline can be said to be explained by the theoretical statements of a second discipline. There are, of course, a number of different theoretical perspectives which have as their focus the relationship between cultural and psychological phenomena, and not all of them are reductive in their implications. One might, for instance, be interested in exploring the psychological concomitants of cultural events in an attempt to supplement culturological explanations with some statements about the character of such psychological processes; or one might wish to investigate the congruence or lack of congruence between certain types of personality systems and certain kinds of cultural systems. But since these theoretical concerns, as I understand them, would not entail a denial of the logical possibility of explaining cultural phenomena in terms of themselves, I will not be concerned with them here.

Perhaps it ought to be emphasized at the outset that this paper lays no claim to settling this issue once and for all. Its purpose is essentially a more modest one, namely, to shift the dialogue from the spongy ground of metaphysics to the arena of scientific methodology—where the whole question properly belongs.

Probably the best place to begin is with a few brief remarks about the concept of culture itself. I think it is fair to say that most anthropologists, at least in the United States, look upon culture as their master concept. Yet if one were to judge from the exhaustive review of the concept by Kroeber and Kluckhohn, it would appear that anthropologists are sharply at odds about the nature of their subject-matter, as well as where to set the logical limits of its boundaries. On the face of it, this is a curious state of affairs for a discipline to find itself in—somewhat like a

group of mammalogists at loggerheads over what a mammal is. I think, however, that if we put aside what anthropologists assert to be the essential nature of culture when they don their philosophic caps, and instead look at how they actually work with the concept in the context of their empirical research, we will find a greater degree of agreement than the bewildering array of definitions contained in the Kroeber-Kluckhohn compendium might suggest. After all, despite their diverse metascientific conceptions of culture, most of the time anthropologists do manage to communicate with each other about the kinds of things they are doing. When we undertake a piece of research, whether it be in the field or the library, we do not first spend time in deciding what and where culture is—as though culture were some object to be located out there in the external world: we allow our theoretical interests to dictate the kinds of phenomena and conceptual “entities” with which we will be concerned. As a matter of fact, a cursory glance through a sample of ethnographic monographs will reveal that anthropologists concern themselves with roughly the same kinds of conceptual “entities”: modes of subsistence, kinship systems, political institutions, magical and religious rituals, and so on.

I would suggest that the basis for this common universe of discourse—beneath all the ostensible definitional diversity—is that anthropologists engaged in empirical research, however they may philosophically define the concept, tend to view culture as a class of phenomena, conceptualized for the purpose of serving their methodological and scientific needs. And while it is one’s theoretical concerns which ultimately determine the kinds of things and events which go to make up the class of phenomena termed culture, it may be useful at this point to summarize briefly some of the major pragmatic considerations which seem to have entered into what might be called the anthropologist’s “pre-philosophic” conception of culture.

To begin with, things and events are identified as cultural phenomena principally by their traditional aspect. Or to put it in somewhat different terms, cultures are built up out of patterned and interrelated traditions—traditions in technology, social organization,<sup>2</sup> and ideology. When physical anthropologists, for example, are confronted with the task of deciding whether certain fossil forms did or did not have culture, they base their judgments upon the presence or absence of *tool traditions*.

Among the important features of the varying traditions which make up culture, two stand out as being especially noteworthy: first, they are

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this paper I have assumed, as I think most American cultural anthropologists do, that “human society” is a sub-system or part of culture. If one wanted to, therefore, the terms “socio-cultural” or “social” could be substituted for the term “cultural,” and I do not think the basic argument of the paper would have to be altered.

transmitted across time and space by non-biological mechanisms; and second, they do not appear to be explainable by an appeal to either genetic or panhuman psychic traits. That is, while the psychobiological characteristics of the hominids would seem to be relevant to an explanation of the emergence of cultural traditions from their infrahuman background as well as the early development of these traditions, there does not appear to have been any significant change in the neural structure of the human species since the Upper Pleistocene, perhaps as much as 50,000 years ago. Since that time, therefore, the psychological characteristics of the human species would not be relevant to an explanation of either the specific content or the variations in time and space of these traditions—or so the present evidence would strongly indicate.<sup>3</sup> The burden of proof would be on those who contend otherwise. Such panhuman psychobiological characteristics, however, might be relevant to explaining why certain *general* features turn up in all cultural traditions, e.g., Wissler's "universal culture pattern."

Now, it can legitimately be argued that in some infrahuman species one does find non-genetically transmitted traditions of a rudimentary sort. But a distinctive attribute of human cultural traditions is that they are cumulative over time in a way that the incipient traditions found associated with infrahuman species are not. This is undoubtedly related to the fact that man has come to be wholly dependent upon these cultural traditions for his biological survival as a species, a fact not true of any other animal species. Some writers stressing the existence of such inchoate traditions (sometimes called *protoculture*) exhibited by infrahuman species, view the behavioral differences between man and the rest of the animal kingdom as constituting a difference in degree. Others have

<sup>3</sup> Wallace has recently written: "The observations of ethologists, the recent discoveries in biological psychiatry, and the increasing attention to physiological process in the new physical anthropology have conspired to make highly questionable the assumption that biological factors in behavior are for all practical purposes constants. Biological determinants of behavior—working *via* disease, nutrition, exposure to sunlight, etc., as well as *via* constitutional factors—are now to be regarded as significant variables for both the group and the individual." I am somewhat puzzled as to what biological determinants of "group" behavior Wallace is referring to here, especially since later in the same essay he says: "With regard to biological determinants of behavior, I do not mean only constitutional, hereditary factors—which can be regarded as constants at least for a major part of a given population (a few deviants excepted). . . ." And while such factors as disease, nutrition and exposure to sunlight certainly do have important biological consequences, the varying importance of these factors in different societies would clearly seem to be a function of cultural determinants and not biological ones. Simply because biological factors are involved in an event it does not follow that the explanation of the event need be biological. Finally, on a somewhat different but related theme, Wallace has written in another place: "Little evidence is available to suggest any substantial inter-racial differences in cognitive capacity."

stressed the cumulative nature of human cultural traditions and view the difference as being one of kind. All writers, however, seem to agree that the behavioral differences between man and his infrahuman relatives are sizable and significant. Finally, there appears to be widespread agreement among anthropologists that the building up and cumulative nature of cultural traditions is made possible by man's ability to create and use symbols, which takes its most prominent form in human language. Some scholars would question whether the ability to symbolize is unique to man, but all would agree, I think, with Fried that "only man, on this planet, engages in massive, systematic and continuous symboling."

## II

Most of the critiques which have been leveled at the superorganic conception of culture can be grouped within two broad categories. The first—and probably the one that anthropologists have found most convincing—would reject the possibility of explaining cultural phenomena wholly in terms of themselves on the grounds that such phenomena have no independent ontological existence, but in "reality" are always found intimately associated with psychological phenomena. In other words, because culture cannot exist without its human carriers, and because in "reality" man and culture are inseparably linked, this position would maintain that to separate culture conceptually from man does violence to the nature of this "reality."

The second type of critique is of a different sort and stems from a moralistic stance. This position would reject the attempt to explain cultural phenomena in terms of themselves on the grounds that this view entails a kind of determinism which reduces man to a mere cipher caught up by impersonal cultural forces over which he has no control. Each of these arguments will now be taken up in turn.

We are indebted to David Bidney for one of the most explicit and thoroughgoing expositions of what can be called the ontological critique of the superorganic position. In his *Theoretical Anthropology* he writes:

The interdependence of the levels of natural phenomena implies that no level is in fact completely intelligible apart from reference to the levels below it. Physical and chemical phenomena are most closely related, but biological and biochemical processes now seem to be inseparably connected also. Similarly, it is to be expected that with the development of psychosomatic medicine we shall learn more about the interdependence of psychological, cultural and biological phenomena.

At each level we may begin with the postulation of certain data which cannot be deduced from the lower levels. As a methodological device, or fiction, it may be pragmatically useful to study the phenomena of a given science "as if" they were independent of other levels. This is particularly easy for

physicists, chemists, and biologists, who deal with disparate objects which may be segregated for special treatment. The problem becomes more difficult in the case of psychologists who wish to study psychological phenomena to the exclusion of biological processes, since the two sets of data obviously pertain to the same object. Similarly, sociologists and anthropologists, who are interested in social behavior and its products, cannot investigate their data except by reference to actual human organisms. That is, psychological, sociological, and cultural phenomena do not exist independently, and hence may not be said to constitute distinct ontological levels or be conceived through themselves alone. Methodologically, it is possible to abstract the latter phenomena and to treat them temporarily "as if" they were independent of the organisms upon which they depend.

It might appear from the above excerpt that Bidney's aim is to distinguish a methodological version of superorganicism from an ontological one, in order to reject the latter in favor of the former. If this were indeed the case, then we would have no difference of opinion and there the matter would end. That this is not his intention, however, is evident from the fact that nowhere in his work does he discuss how such a methodological superorganicism might be used as a procedure in the scientific study of cultural phenomena. The reasons for this, I think, are abundantly clear. In Bidney's view, the scientific disciplines are primarily distinguishable not on logical grounds, i.e., by their methodological procedures or theoretical structures, but rather by their different ontological assumptions and commitments. If Bidney thought otherwise, he would be obliged to give serious consideration to the logical and scientific implications of methodological superorganicism. But this would commit him to entertaining the possibility of a naturalistic, autonomous science of culture, and Bidney will have none of that. An examination of the reasons for his rejection of such a science of culture would carry us too far afield. Suffice it to note that Bidney is not so much interested in what anthropology *is*, but in what it *ought* to be; and his vision of what it ought to be stems from his own very personal appraisal of anthropology in particular and the human condition in general. Bidney is not especially concerned with the kinds of empirical questions that are of interest to most anthropologists. What interests him most are a broad range of humanistic and metaphysical questions having to do with such matters as—human freedom, the nature of cultural reality, and how man freely creates his cultural environment as a means of fulfilling his basic needs and desires. It is this humanistic concern which leads him to seek a metascientific or ontological theory of culture, and it is this search which impels him to develop his critique of the superorganic conception of culture—indeed one might well construe this to be the major purpose of his book:

Those who insist so repetitiously upon the autonomy of culture, namely, the superorganicists, mean to assert an ontological principle as well as an epis-

temic fact. The ontological issue is whether cultural phenomena constitute a closed system and are independent of psychological processes, that is, superpsychic, or whether in the last analysis they cannot be understood or said to exist, either wholly or in part, independently of the mind of man. . . .

Our thesis is that neither psychology nor history is a sufficient cause or condition of culture, because the latter is an inherently complex phenomenon comprising both psychological and historically acquired experience of nature. Concrete, actual experience is psychocultural and involves a creative synthesis of psychological activity and cultural achievement in relation to a given environment.

The crux of Bidney's argument seems to be as follows: that each of the sciences strives to isolate for special consideration its own particular segment of reality; but the interdependence of the levels of reality makes for certain difficulties in this endeavor. Some scientific disciplines, such as physics, chemistry and biology, find it methodologically easy to accomplish because they deal with "disparate objects which may be segregated for special treatment." In the case of the cultural sciences, however, it is clearly impossible. Since there is no separate segment of reality (ontological level) which corresponds to cultural phenomena, we cannot speak of explaining these phenomena in terms of themselves, but must always include as an integral part of our explanations, statements about psychological phenomena as well.

Now one can readily agree that in "reality" all cultural phenomena are intimately linked with psychological phenomena; but is it not also the case that psychological phenomena are at the same time intimately associated with physiological phenomena and these in turn with physicochemical and subatomic phenomena. Yet it is not claimed (at least not by Bidney) that to explain cultural or psychological phenomena we must show how they are related to the biochemical and sub-cellular physical processes going on within human organisms—although some writers might contend that this is the ultimate goal of science.

Bidney, it should be pointed out in all fairness, explicitly asserts that his psychocultural approach does not seek to reduce cultural phenomena to the psychological level—as a matter of fact, he labels any such attempt the "naturalistic fallacy." I must confess, however, to being somewhat uncertain as to the meaning which Bidney attaches to the terms "reduction" and "psychocultural." In support of his psychocultural approach, for example, he contends: "An adequate theory of culture must explain the origin of culture and its intrinsic relations to the psychobiological nature of man. To insist upon the self-sufficiency and autonomy of culture, as if culture were a closed system requiring only historical explanations in terms of other cultural phenomena, is not to explain culture, but to leave its origin a mystery or an accident of time."

Bidney is so acutely attuned to the detection of logical fallacies, it is

surprising that he should be guilty in the above passage of the genetic fallacy. The psychobiological nature of man, to be sure, *is* relevant to explaining the origins of culture (who ever denied this). But to account for the initial origins of culture is quite a different matter from providing an explanation of its present-day diversity of content and form.

Basic to Bidney's view of culture is his notion of "human nature." He maintains that "culture is a direct necessary expression of human nature" and furthermore that this "human nature, like culture evolves or unfolds in time." He then goes on to add: ". . . while the innate biological potentialities of man remain more or less constant the actual, effective psychophysical powers and capabilities are subject to development in time. . . . The point I wish to make does not raise the problem of racial differences, but only the possibility of the cultural perfectibility of human nature as an acquired, historical achievement which varies with different cultures."

But how are we to determine empirically what these "psychophysical powers and capabilities" are, which seem to unfold independently of man's innate biological potentialities, and which give rise to cultural variations in time and space? Bidney does not tell us, except to say that they vary with the state of human culture. Ultimately what we are left with is a mode of explanation that goes something like this: Cheyenne culture differs from Arunta culture because they are expressions of different human natures. And how do we know that Cheyenne and Arunta human natures are different? Obviously, because their cultures are different. The sterility of this kind of verbal explanation is, I think, apparent and scarcely needs further comment.

As for Bidney's disavowal of reductionism, his remarks about the connection between chemical and physical phenomena and the development of psychosomatic medicine casting light on the interdependence between cultural, psychological and biological phenomena, indicate not only a readiness to deal with several (and perhaps even all) levels simultaneously, but also a conviction that phenomena at the "higher" levels *can* be explained by those at the "lower" levels. If we are to deal with a number of different levels at once, however, what is required are empirical laws which permit us to connect logically the phenomena (or more accurately the concepts and statements which describe and explain these phenomena) of the several levels. The success of a field such as biochemistry, for example, stems from the fact that as a result of empirical developments in biology and chemistry, such laws and hypotheses have been formulated, making it possible logically to derive statements about certain biological phenomena from statements about certain chemical phenomena. We will return to this issue shortly, when considering reductionism more fully.

## III

What appears to be involved in Bidney's position, and, indeed, in the whole ontological critique of the superorganic, is an erroneous view of the rationale for the division of labor between the various scientific disciplines, as well as the basis for making logical distinctions between them. Bidney sees the world in terms of a series of emergent levels of reality. Moreover, he writes about these levels of reality as though the "nature" of things and the interrelationships between those natures were somehow given to us to be read off by direct inspection. But the world does not present itself to us neatly packaged into cultural events, psychological events, biological events or physicochemical events; nor does it present itself to us in terms of "levels of reality" or "natural phenomena." It comes to us as a stream of concrete events which are "just what they are." Out of the countless properties associated with any given event, the ones that are selected out for special concern will depend upon one's theoretical interests and scientific purposes. Since language is by its very nature abstractive—and all knowledge about the world if it is not to remain private must be stated in propositional form—we can never exhaust the total "concreteness" of an event. Nor is it the purpose of any theoretical science to faithfully reproduce "reality," either in whole or in part. We are, in effect, constantly engaged in a process of theoretical selecting-out, and it is for this reason that the notion of "pure" description is a chimera. To put it in a slightly different way, while there may be one "reality," there are many different kinds of questions which one can address to that reality and in consequence many different ways of conceptualizing it. And since this reality is never grasped directly, but only through our conceptualizations of it, the nature of reality turns out to be as varied as there are different theoretical formulations of it. We cannot somehow get behind our concepts to a non-conceptualized "real" world. The point of all this is that the *logical* independence of a science is not based upon having its own separate "chunk of reality" with which to deal—for this is not true of any science. Rather, it is based upon the fact that it has a set of distinct questions or problems which are its special concern, and that in seeking answers to these problems it has developed a body of distinct terms and concepts (which determine its subject-matter), as well as laws and theories (which organize and explain its subject-matter).

Now, I would submit that cultural anthropology has a set of *cultural* questions which it has traditionally sought to answer (e.g., the relationship between types of residence, types of descent and types of kinship terminology; the relationship between changing modes of subsistence and complexity of social organization; the relationship between centralized political systems and such features as trade or the construction and



maintenance of large-scale public works or ecological differentiation—to name but a few that come readily to mind). I am aware that in addition to the kinds of questions mentioned above, anthropologists have, especially within recent decades, been interested in asking questions about all sorts of things, e.g., national character, socialization, basic personality structure, values, themes, etc. I am not so much concerned here, however, with the special interests of particular anthropologists, as I am in logical distinctions between different theoretical structures and the modes of questioning from which they issue. If an anthropologist wishes to ask psychological questions, then he is obliged to operate within the conceptual and theoretical framework of psychology. But this does not mean that anthropology as a discipline is *about* psychology, it merely signifies that some anthropologists are interested in psychological questions. It is the failure to fully appreciate the fact that different kinds of questioning logically necessitate the use of different concepts and theoretical schemes which has sometimes made culture-personality research so vulnerable to criticism. For example, in an excellent survey of work in this field, Bert Kaplan has made the point that all-too-frequently anthropologists have inferred personality configurations wholly or in large part from cultural data, rather than dealing with personality in more autonomous, i.e., psychological, terms. Since they then want to relate personality back to culture, their methodological procedure becomes circular and a great deal of their theoretical statements tautological.

Some of the questions traditionally posed by cultural anthropologists have also been asked by some of the other cultural sciences such as sociology; some are unique to anthropology. The science of psychology, on the other hand, has focused on problems relating to the intraorganismic psychic processes of individuals, usually in relation to a specific environmental setting. Anthropologists, in contrast, have not been so much concerned with the inner processes of individuals *qua* individuals, as they have in *traditional ways* or *patterns* of behaving. Moreover, in seeking answers to its questions about these traditional patterns of behaving, anthropology has developed a body of concepts (e.g., segmentary lineage, virilocal residence, cross-cousin marriage, ramage, redistribution, irrigation state, etc.)—as well as theoretical statements relating these concepts to each other—which appear nowhere in the conceptual framework of psychology. This, at least in part, is the logical rationale for the methodological assertion that cultural phenomena can be explained in terms of themselves.

To many anthropologists, who view culture as merely an “abstraction” or a “logical construct,” the notion that cultural phenomena can be said to explain or cause anything (no less themselves) would seem to be patent nonsense. Thus, Wallace quotes with an approving nod the well-known remark by Radcliffe-Brown that, “To say of culture patterns that

they act upon an individual . . . is as absurd as to hold a quadratic equation capable of committing a murder." Woodger has graphically characterized the type of philosophy expressed in the above quote as "finger and thumb" metaphysics—the view that a "thing is real or exists only if it can in principle be picked up between the finger and thumb." But its metaphysics to one side, Radcliffe-Brown's comment is also highly misleading because it tends to confuse the purely formal or logical structure of a science with the empirical implications or relevance of that structure. From a strictly formal point of view, all conceptual entities in science are in some sense "abstractions" or "logical constructs"—since science is a form of sociolinguistic behavior, what else could they conceivably be? But those who espouse a logical-construct view of culture are claiming much more than this: they mean to assert that while culture patterns are constructed (or abstracted) out of a welter of observations, they are not in themselves directly observable—the implication being that this makes them somehow less real and causally significant than, say, persons or sticks and stones.

First, we ought to be reminded that scientific concepts, while they may be suggested by empirical data, are not abstracted from such data by a simple process of induction. They are, rather, the products of an informed and creative imagination, or as it has so often been put "free inventions of the human intellect." What is more, few conceptual entities in science are directly observable, or can be said to be physically real in the sense in which sticks and stones are real. (It is not inappropriate to note here that *names*, in addition to sticks and stones, *can* hurt me.) This does not mean, however, that such entities have no empirical referents, although their logical relationship to observational data is rarely a simple and direct one; nor does it mean that such entities may not form part of the logical structure of causal explanations. As was noted earlier in the quote by Goldstein, whether different investigators take a realistic, phenomenalist, or perhaps no view at all, toward the ontological status of conceptual entities, the empirical work of the science is in no way importantly affected since, whatever one's metaphysical position, the *observational* data to be explained are the same. From the standpoint of the development of a science, the explanatory power of conceptual entities is of far greater importance than are questions about their ontological status. Mayo makes this quite clear: "If theoretical concepts are only to be explained by referring to the particular theory in which they have a place, and if the only justification for accepting a particular theory as established is that it enables us to explain known facts and successfully predict new ones, then it follows that we can gain nothing by either attaching or withholding the epithet 'real.'" And Toulmin writes in a similar vein: "Evidently, then, it is a mistake to put questions about the reality or existence of theoretical entities too much in the centre of the

picture. In accepting a theory scientists need not, to begin with, answer these questions either way. . . ."

Within recent decades the whole problem of the ontological status of theoretical entities has come in for a great deal of discussion in the physical sciences because of certain conceptual difficulties arising out of developments in subatomic physics. But anthropologists do not deal in sub-microscopic phenomena; they are concerned with what, by contrast, are macroscopic events. And as far as the conceptual entities formulated by anthropologists to explain these events are concerned, there are two crucial questions that ought to be asked of them: Do they have empirical referents which can be specified with any degree of precision? And do they have explanatory power, i.e., where would we be in organizing and interpreting our data without them? In this sense at least, culture patterns such as, for example, "castes," "markets," "lineages" are just as real and may be as causally significant in scientific explanations as "atoms," "genes," and "gravitational fields"—or for that matter, "drives," "habit strengths" and "cognitive maps."

Thus far in the discussion we have been skirting the problem of reduction in the sciences, and it is time that we faced it more directly. The term "reduction" turns up frequently in social science literature, usually appended to the phrase "the fallacy of," as though reductionism were some sort of illicit logical practice. Actually, the reduction of one science, either wholly or in part, to some other one may, under certain conditions, represent a significant advance of scientific knowledge.

One science is said to be reducible to another science (or one part of a science to another part) when all the terms and concepts of the one science are logically "connected" to those of the other (either by the terms of the one being explicitly defined in terms of the scientific vocabulary of the other, or more commonly through suitable empirical hypotheses) in such a way so as to make it possible for all the theoretical statements of the one science to be derived logically from the theoretical statements of the other. Thus, to reduce one science to another does not somehow decrease the diversity of the natural world or make a certain range of phenomena illusory, as some writers believe; it merely implies that the theoretical structure of one science can, either entirely or in part, be subsumed under or explained by the theoretical structure of a second.

To cite one of the classic cases of a successful reduction in science, physicists are agreed that the laws of thermodynamics which contain such concepts as heat, temperature, and entropy are reducible to the laws of mechanics which contain no references to these concepts at all. Making this reduction possible are certain empirical hypotheses which logically connect the concepts of the two sciences, e.g., temperature is posited as being proportional to the mean kinetic energy of gas molecules. As a result, physicists are enabled to introduce as premises in their

explanations hypotheses (kinetic theory of matter) which omit all references to such concepts as heat, temperature, etc., and which substitute in their place only concepts referring to the things that are part of the subject-matter of mechanics, such as the motion of molecules. In consequence, all the statements in thermodynamics can be logically derived—and without these statements losing in the process any of the theoretical content that they have in thermodynamics—from statements in mechanics.

The same formal requirements would hold in the case of reducing the science of culture to psychology. Concepts such as “lineage,” “caste,” “polygyny” “levirate” would have to be logically connected to such terms as “drive,” “sublimation,” “ego processes,” “aggression” and “condition reflex, so as to provide a basis for specifying in *psychological* terms the conditions which give rise to the occurrence of different cultural phenomena. Clearly, we are a long way from any such reduction. Take the concept of “lineage,” for example. A lineage, to be sure, is a particular grouping of individuals interacting in certain ways. But a lineage also has an organizational structure which persists through time irrespective of the particular individuals who may be members of the lineage at any given moment; and it is precisely these organizational features of the lineage in which anthropologists have been most interested. In other words, the kinds of questions we want to ask of lineage organization are not the same questions we wish to ask about the psychological make-up of the individuals who may be members of the lineage at any given moment in time. Nor is it possible, and this is really the crux of the argument, to derive logically, statements about the organizational features of the lineage from statements about the psychological characteristics of its members. Any attempt to explain lineage organization in terms of the behaving of its individual members would require that we conceive of these individuals not in psychological terms, but in terms of the statuses they occupy and the roles they perform. And since the concepts of status and role would be meaningless except if interpreted as part of the organizational structure of the lineage, we would, in effect, be assuming a knowledge of the very phenomena we were trying to explain. The point here is that the lineage concept, while its scientific usefulness may be validated by observing individuals interacting in certain social situations, is not simply an abstraction from these observations. Rather, it is “invented” precisely for the purpose of making sense out of that observed behavior. Maurice Mandelbaum, who has similarly argued for the irreducibility of societal concepts, has put it this way: “In order that we may claim to know as inclusive and long-enduring an entity as the Catholic church we must be in a position to single out for consideration the activities of those individuals who, by reason of their status, were important in the history of that institution; but to know what it means to

have a particular status in an institution involves us in knowing the institution and is not reducible, without circularity, to how an individual influences the actions of other individuals."

Finally, this part of the discussion would hardly be complete if it were not noted that anthropologists *have* explained lineage organization in cultural terms, e.g., by economic arrangements, inheritance of strategic resources, etc.

The main drift of the argument up to this point has been to show that given the present stage of development of both sciences, the science of culture is not fully and without loss of theoretical meaning reducible to the science of psychology. But what of the future? Has not the general trend in science been toward greater reductionism? And is it not likely therefore that eventually the science of culture will be reduced to psychology (or indeed that psychology will be reduced to physiology and so on)? This is clearly an empirical question which relates to the future state of the sciences being considered, and therefore is not answerable on logical grounds alone. Culturology may at some future date be reduced to psychology, it may not—we can only wait and see. In either case, the outcome will depend upon the direction taken by the empirical development of both disciplines. In this connection, it is important to emphasize that the reducibility or irreducibility of a science is not an inherent characteristic of it; the possibility and scientific significance of reduction is always relative to the given state of development of the sciences concerned. If future theoretical developments should make it possible for the science of culture, or portions of it, to be reduced to psychology—and from the vantage point of this moment in time such developments seem very remote indeed—then psychology will have become a very different science from what it now is.

Turning from the future to the present state of the sciences of culture and psychology, it is difficult to imagine what would be gained scientifically if one were reduced to the other at the current time, assuming that such a reduction was now logically feasible. One can scarcely speak in any meaningful way of reducing culturology to psychology until there is a science of culture to be reduced, and a science of psychology for it to be reduced to. As Nagel has noted, if reduction is to represent a genuine advance of scientific knowledge, and not merely an arid formal exercise, the sciences concerned must be at appropriately mature levels of development. It need hardly be pointed out that the sciences being considered here are a long way from achieving such levels of theoretical sophistication. And if we can further judge from the history of science, scientific knowledge has never been significantly advanced by the simple addition of the terms and theories of one science to another. What I am suggesting here is this: that given the present undeveloped state of both the sciences of culture and psychology, the cause

of the advancement of the two disciplines in particular, and scientific knowledge in general, can best be served by each continuing to further develop and refine their own conceptual and theoretical structures.

From everything that has been said it should be apparent that it is not sufficient merely to assert, as Spiro has done, that “. . . personality variables are as important for the maintenance of social systems as for their change. Without the use of personality concepts, attempts fully to explain the operation of these [cultural] systems, either in terms of efficient causes or in terms of functional consequences, are seldom convincing.” One must demonstrate how personality variables are to be logically connected to cultural variables through empirical hypotheses so as to yield explanations of how cultural systems undergo change as well as how they operate. This Spiro has not done. As a matter of fact, in the essay from which the above quote was excerpted, it is evident that Spiro is not concerned with explaining why different cultures are the way they are and how they have come to be that way, but with the very different question of how individuals are motivated to assume the social roles necessary to keep the cultural system going. In other words, his entire analysis assumes an on-going cultural system, and then provides an explanation of how it perpetuates itself; it does not explain the cultural system itself (why this set of roles rather than some others?).

This matter of keeping the questions being posed sorted out, as this paper has tried to show, is an important one. Anthropology has often been characterized by a great deal of futile and unproductive controversy because some writers have accused others of not adequately answering questions that they did not ask in the first place. White and Kroeber, for example, have sought to explain cultural innovations by the antecedent cultural matrix out of which they arise (I am not so much concerned with the substantive content of the explanations offered by these writers, as with their methodological approach). The question White and Kroeber are concerned with is why it is that certain innovations are made in certain cultures and not others, and why in certain historic periods and not others. In short, theirs is essentially a question about *rates* or *patterns* of innovation. They are not asking why in a particular culture at a particular time, individual A makes an innovation rather than individual B. This is patently a biographical question which cannot be answered by their methodological approach. Thus, Copeland's remarks that White's thesis fails to explain why Gandhi, Churchill, Hitler and Mussolini and not some other persons did what they did, misconstrues White's intention.

Nor will the Kroeber-White approach tell us anything about the psychological processes involved in making an innovation. Barnett in his book on innovation views the innovative process as being essentially a mental one, involving the recombination of two or more “mental configurations.” A major limitation of this perspective, as Wallace sees it, is

that it fails to “. . . state the conditions under which a particular innovation will occur; i.e., to predict which of several possible recombinations will be made, by whom, and when.” Wallace has his own view of the innovative process, based upon what he calls the “principle of maximal organization,” which asserts: “. . . that an organism acts in such a way as to maximize under existing conditions, and to the extent of its capacity, the amount of organization in the dynamic system represented in its maze-way; that is to say, it works to increase both the complexity and the orderliness of its experience.”

Wallace adds that if a particular innovative recombination is to occur, the necessary “proto-typical and stimulus configurations” must be present. He then sums up his position by saying that “. . . in itself innovation is an ‘instinctive’ propensity of the human organism activated under the merest provocation of desire for richer or more orderly experience.”

Now, one can conceptualize innovation in any way that one’s theoretical interests demand, but if I understand them correctly, I do not see how either Barnett’s or Wallace’s conceptualization of the innovative process will help us very much in answering questions about varying *rates* of innovation in time and space.

#### IV

The ontological objection to the superorganic view of culture has been discussed at considerable length because it is clearly the most frequently expressed criticism of that position. The second type of critique can be dealt with more summarily.

As mentioned earlier, one gets the impression from reading many of the strictures directed at the superorganic view of culture that often the objection is not a logical or scientific one but rather a moralistic one; that is, the objection is to the alleged deterministic implications of the position. Opler, for instance, has recently fired a verbal fusillade at those deterministic “culturologists” who would strip anthropology of its “warmth and purpose, its concern with humanity.” Why the attempt to explain cultural phenomena in terms of other cultural phenomena should indicate a lack of concern with humanity, or turn men into mechanical robots, is not readily apparent. One would think that, on the contrary, only to the extent man is able to develop a body of reliable knowledge about how cultural systems work, will his efforts to exert some measure of control over his cultural environment meet with any degree of success. I suspect one of the major reasons some writers find the superorganic position so repugnant is they tend to see it as entailing the view that, regardless of what man does, cultural forces will grind away inexorably to their fated end. But this is to wholly misinterpret the character of causal explanation in science and to confuse it with some brand of metaphysical fatalism. Causal explanations do not somehow shape and con-

strain events in the phenomenal world, they merely enable us to understand and predict them. The laws of gravitation do not cause apples to fall from trees, nor can we object to meteorology for making it rain so often.

This is not the place to undertake a full-scale review of the logic of scientific explanation and its relationship to the issue of determinism versus indeterminism, but a few brief remarks are warranted.

Whether or not a universal determinism can be attributed to the world in the sense that for every event there is a unique set of conditions without whose presence the event would not have occurred, and that given these conditions the event in question will always occur, is a doctrine which cannot be proved or disproved on either a *a priori* grounds or by citing empirical evidence. It is an *assumption* that we make about the world which says, in effect, that all events have determinate causes and that we ought to look for them. Some such assumption would seem to be a precondition of our very ability to understand and effectively cope with the world in which we live, for the opposite assumption calls up a kind of Kafkaesque world in which events occur with maddening whimsicality, without apparent rhyme or reason. As a heuristic principle, determinism is basic to doing science, since the goal of the scientific enterprise is explanation, and the ideal of scientific explanation is to be able to state the necessary and sufficient conditions for the occurrence of an event. It is of course true that many events cannot now be explained in strictly causal terms (some may never be so explained), and that much of our knowledge about the world is of a statistical or probabilistic nature. But to say this is to say something about the present state of our theoretical knowledge of the world, and not to describe its ontological structure. For to argue from the epistemic fact that our theories do not at the present time permit us to causally explain the occurrence of a specific event to the conclusion that "this event has no cause," is to advance a metaphysical proposition which can never be verified. And it may, of course, with future theoretical developments, be falsified.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Recent developments in microphysics, or more precisely philosophic interpretations of these developments, have cast doubt on the heuristic value of the doctrine of determinism. It is proclaimed that causality has been dethroned and indeterminism once again reinstated in Nature. Physicists seem to be sharply divided on this issue. But from the vast literature on the subject one thing is clear, namely, that the dispute is about the theoretical interpretation of the data and not the data themselves. What the dissenters from the orthodox interpretation, such as Einstein, de Broglie, and Schrödinger, seem to object to, are the ontological conclusions which have been drawn from what they regard as conceptual and theoretical difficulties in formulating strictly causal laws at the quantum-mechanical level. Moreover, as a number of writers have pointed out, the theoretical foundations of microphysics are not as acausal as they have often been made out to be. In any case, these developments are not very relevant to the phenomena dealt with by anthropologists, since they are macro-events and physicists agree that the interpretation of macro-events are just as deterministic as they ever were.



The superorganic position, therefore, is neither more nor less deterministic than any other scientific procedure. It merely asserts that from a methodological standpoint, cultural events can be explained in terms of other cultural events, and that the motives, drives and psychological dispositions of individuals are not relevant to answering certain cultural questions. If an investigator comes back with the counterassertion that such psychological phenomena are relevant, then he must demonstrate logically and empirically in what way they are. But the introduction of individuals and their psychological characteristics as explanatory factors would not make his explanations any the less deterministic than they would be if these phenomena were excluded. The science of psychology, in short, is no less deterministic than the science of culture.

### Conclusions

The development of a naturalistic and autonomous science of culture for which Tylor argued so cogently rests squarely upon the possibility of explaining cultural phenomena in terms of themselves. For if this cannot be done, then there can be no autonomous science of culture, and the study of cultural phenomena becomes a branch of whichever scientific discipline can provide explanations for them. This paper has attempted to demonstrate that there are no *logical* or *scientific* reasons why culture cannot be explained in terms of culture, and that is answering certain kinds of questions it makes perfectly good methodological sense to do so. This position, as I have tried to show, does not commit us to any metaphysical view of the constitution of the world—although it is true that often proponents of superorganicism have phrased their arguments in terms (e.g., “levels of reality” or “reality *sui generis*”) which might lead one to believe that this is the case.<sup>5</sup> It does not, in other words, compel one (as Bidney contends) to conceive of culture as some sort of metaphysically closed system. Obviously, cultural phenomena do in “reality” interact with all kinds of noncultural phenomena. But our attempts to explain cultural phenomena are something else again, and it is here that we strive to achieve logical closure. The ultimate ideal of any science is the formulation of a comprehensive and systematic theoretical structure, i.e., a set of highly interconnected, hierarchically ordered and “logically closed” theoretical propositions. Few sciences have ever even approached this kind of theoretical maturity, and there are good reasons for thinking that a science of culture may never do so. But certainly we

<sup>5</sup> It is interesting to note that one of the staunchest adherents of the superorganicist position, Leslie A. White, in one of his more recent statements, defines culture as a “class of things and events, dependent upon symboling, considered in an extrasomatic context,” which I take to be a methodological assertion and not a definition at all in the sense in which White intends it to be.

ought not to abandon the quest, since much can be learned from just trying.

The main burden of this paper has been a logical one. It has been maintained that there is indeed a set of strictly cultural questions and problems which have never been the concern of the science of psychology, and that these have formed the traditional core of the anthropological enterprise. Moreover, in seeking answers to these problems, anthropology has formulated concepts, theoretical entities, laws (or if one prefers, generalizations) and theories which do not form any part of the theoretical apparatus of psychology and cannot be reduced to it. This is the logical basis for treating culture as an autonomous sphere of phenomena, explainable in terms of itself. It is wholly beside the point to maintain that anthropologists cannot proceed in this way or that they ought not proceed in this way, for the brute fact of the matter is that in their empirical research this is precisely the way they do most often proceed. In this regard, it is a curious fact that when cultural phenomena are explained in terms of themselves in the context of anthropological empirical work, few eyebrows are raised. It is only when anthropologists get philosophical and start to talk about what they are doing that all the trouble begins.

## 5 The Ethnographic Study of Cognitive Systems<sup>1</sup>



Charles O. Frake

THERE ARE CERTAIN INAVOIDABLE CONSEQUENCES OF A SYMBOL-BASED DEFINITION of culture. These consequences are exacerbated when total emphasis is placed on language taken as the medium of thought and regarded as prior to action. Given such an approach, culture must be an indirect rather than a direct reaction to external, non-cultural reality. Indeed, the result of such a formulation is to raise the question, *what is reality?* Specifically, is reality the environment or is it the perception of the environment? To take a simple example, is the presence of a certain resource a fact with which a culture must grapple, or is its presence significant only if the bearers of the culture perceive it? From the arguments found in the next three papers, it will be realized that this formulation of the problem is not altogether a fair one, but it may be impossible to formulate this problem without taking an implicit stand about it.

*The dichotomy so crudely represented in the previous paragraph may become clearer when its application to fieldwork, perhaps the crux*

<sup>1</sup> In preparing this paper I have especially benefited from suggestions by Harold C. Conklin, Thomas Gladwin, Volney Steffler, and William C. Sturtevant.

SOURCE: From Thomas Gladwin and William C. Sturtevant (editors), *Anthropology and Human Behavior* (Anthropological Society of Washington, 1962), pp. 72-85. Reprinted with the permission of the author and the Anthropological Society of Washington.

Charles O. Frake (b. 1930) is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Stanford University. He has done fieldwork in the Philippines and this has been the basis of such articles as "A Structural Description of Subanun 'Religious Behavior,'" and "The Diagnosis of Disease Among the Subanun of Mindanao." His fieldwork relates directly to his theoretical interests in ethno-science.

of the debate, is considered. Anthropologists who emphasize cognitive sets are logically bound to emphasize reflective statements gathered from informants and place less emphasis on statistically analyzed observations of concrete behavior. It is difficult to convey the importance of this issue in a brief prefatory remark. The anthropologist who emphasizes the cognitive approach, which he may call "the new ethnography," desires to penetrate into the minds of the carriers of the culture he is studying; he tries to find out what things mean to the actors. The value of such an approach is said to lie in the opportunity it gives to break the bonds of ethnocentrism which, in the past, have forced ethnographers to approach alien cultures not in terms of the culture studied but in terms of the categories and cognitive sets of the ethnographers' culture. Desirable as this may seem, it is not without major problems of its own, as Harris will be found to argue (II:7).

Note that the five paragraphs following these remarks and heading the Frake article comprise the original introduction to Frake's and Conklin's pieces. That introduction was written by Thomas Gladwin and William C. Sturtevant, the editors of the volume in which these selections originally appeared.

THIS PAPER, AND THE COMMENT BY HAROLD C. CONKLIN WHICH FOLLOWS, DESCRIBE an emerging method which promises to revitalize the central but perhaps methodologically weakest part of anthropology. Although the influence of descriptive linguistics is evident, this new method is an ethnographic one, not a linguistic one. Drs. Frake and Conklin both received graduate training in anthropology at Yale University, and have worked closely together during and since that time. Both are leaders in the development of a new approach to ethnography.

Authors such as Frake, Conklin, Wemreich, Hymes, Wallace, and Goodenough have used "ethnoscience," "folk science," "structural semantics," "structural analysis of lexical content," and "componential analysis" to refer to this method or aspects of it. Lévi-Strauss refers to a similar approach as "l'analyse structurale." Like other workers in this field Conklin and Frake have been inspired primarily by structural linguistics. However, a significant innovation by these two writers is the introduction of principles derived from biosystematics. Another important aspect of their work is their insistence that the boundaries of a folk classification, as well as its internal structure, must be empirically determined rather than arbitrarily assumed. In addition, each is actively engaged in applying and modifying the techniques in intensive field work; obviously this is the only way to advance an ethnographic method.

The significance of the methodology outlined in these two papers goes beyond its contribution to descriptive ethnography. The strategies outlined here promise a revolution in cultural anthropology comparable to that which took place in recent decades in linguistics. Linguistic analysis has cast aside the mold of the classical grammars to describe each language in terms appropriate to its own structure. Ethnography is struggling to break the mold of the categorical outline of culture which most anthropologists now take with them to the field.

*These papers describe the first steps toward a new technique of description and analysis which will in the future be able to describe the totality of culture as it exists among its bearers—and most particularly in the functional form in which it is presented to each succeeding generation during socialization. Hymes has considered the way in which language is used to communicate culture, Neisser has suggested some ways in which cultural material may be organized in learning, and Frake and Conklin propose a means for describing the content of culture so transmitted and learned.*

*Those persons familiar with the opportunities and difficulties associated with the programming of heuristic or simulation models into high-speed digital computers will also recognize that the papers which follow provide one of the first feasible bases for programming realistic models of cultural behavior.*

*The fact that Dr. Conklin was invited to supplement Dr. Frake's paper reflects the close collaboration of those two anthropologists in their joint development of a new methodology. Either could have written the basic paper, but the record would be incomplete without the contribution of both.*

### *Words for Things*

A relatively simple task commonly performed by ethnographers is that of getting names for things. The ethnographer typically performs this task by pointing to or holding up the apparent constituent objects of an event he is describing, eliciting the native names for the objects, and then matching each native name with the investigator's own word for the object. The logic of the operation is: if the informant calls object X a *mbubu* and I call object X a *rock*, then *mbubu* means *rock*. In this way are compiled the ordinary ethnobotanical monographs with their lists of matched native and scientific names for plant specimens. This operation probably also accounts for a good share of the native names parenthetically inserted in so many monograph texts: "Among the grasses (*sigbet*) whose grains (*bunga nen*) are used for beads (*bitekel*) none is more highly prized than Job's tears (*glias*)."<sup>1</sup> Unless the reader is a comparative linguist of the languages concerned, he may well ask what interest these parenthetical insertions contain other than demonstrating that the ethnographer has discharged a minimal obligation toward collecting linguistic data. This procedure for obtaining words for things, as well as the "so-what" response it so often evokes, assumes the objective identifiability of discrete "things" apart from a particular culture. It construes the name-getting task as one of simply matching verbal labels for "things" in two languages. Accordingly, the "problem-oriented" anthropologist, with a broad, cross-cultural perspective, may disclaim any interest in these labels; all that concerns him is the presence or absence of a particular "thing" in a given culture.

If, however, instead of "getting words for things," we redefine the task as one of finding the "things" that go with the words, the eliciting

of terminologies acquires a more general interest. In actuality not even the most concrete, objectively apparent physical object can be identified apart from some culturally defined system of concepts. An ethnographer should strive to define objects<sup>2</sup> according to the conceptual system of the people he is studying. Let me suggest, then, that one look upon the task of getting names for things not as an exercise in linguistic recording, but as a way of finding out what are in fact the "things" in the environment of the people being studied. This paper consists of some suggestions toward the formulation of an operationally-explicit methodology for discerning how people construe their world of experience from the way they talk about it. Specifically these suggestions concern the analysis of terminological systems in a way which reveals the conceptual principles that generate them.

In a few fields, notably in kinship studies, anthropologists have already successfully pushed an interest in terminological systems beyond a matching of translation labels. Since Morgan's day no competent student of kinship has looked upon his task as one of simply finding a tribe's words for "uncle," "nephew," or "cousin." The recognition that the denotative range of kinship categories must be determined empirically in each case, that the categories form a system, and that the semantic contrasts underlying the system are amenable to formal analysis, has imparted to kinship studies a methodological rigor and theoretical productivity rare among ethnographic endeavors. Yet all peoples are vitally concerned with kinds of phenomena other than genealogical relations; consequently there is no reason why the study of a people's concepts of these other phenomena should not offer a theoretical interest comparable to that of kinship studies.

Even with reference to quite obvious kinds of material objects, it has long been noted that many people do not see "things" quite the way we do. However, anthropologists in spite of their now well-established psychological interests have notably ignored the cognition of their subjects. Consequently other investigators still rely on stock anecdotes of "primitive thinking" handed down by explorers, philologists, and psychologists since the nineteenth century. Commonly these anecdotes have been cited as examples of early stages in the evolution of human thought—which, depending on the anecdote selected, may be either from blindly concrete to profoundly abstract or from hopelessly vague to scientifically precise. A typical citation, purporting to illustrate the primitive's deficient abstractive ability, concerns a Brazilian Indian tribe which allegedly has no word for "parrot" but only words for "kinds of parrots." The people of such a tribe undoubtedly classify the birds of their environment in some fashion; certainly they do not bestow a unique per-

<sup>2</sup> In this paper the term *object* designates anything construed as a member of a category, whether perceptible or not.

sonal name on each individual bird specimen they encounter. Classification means that individual bird specimens must be matched against the defining attributes of conceptual categories and thereby judged to be equivalent for certain purposes to some other specimens but different from still others. Since no two birds are alike in every discernable feature, any grouping into sets implies a selection of only a limited number of features as significant for contrasting kinds of birds. A person learns which features are significant from his fellows as part of his cultural equipment. He does not receive this information from the birds. Consequently there is no necessary reason that a Brazilian Indian should heed those particular attributes which, for the English-speaker, make equivalent all the diverse individual organisms he labels "parrots." Some of this Indian's categories may seem quite specific, and others quite general, when compared to our grouping of the same specimens. But learning that it takes the Indian many words to name the objects we happen to group together in one set is trivial information compared to knowing how the Indian himself groups these objects and which attributes he selects as dimensions to generate a taxonomy of avifauna. With the latter knowledge we learn what these people regard as significant about birds. If we can arrive at comparable knowledge about their concepts of land animals, plants, soils, weather, social relations, personalities, and supernaturals, we have at least a sketch map of the world in the image of the tribe.

The analysis of a culture's terminological systems will not, of course, exhaustively reveal the cognitive world of its members, but it will certainly tap a central portion of it. Culturally significant cognitive features must be communicable between persons in one of the standard symbolic systems of the culture. A major share of these features will undoubtedly be codable in a society's most flexible and productive communication device, its language. Evidence also seems to indicate that those cognitive features requiring most frequent communication will tend to have standard and relatively short linguistic labels. Accordingly, a commonly distinguished category of trees is more likely to be called something like "elm" by almost all speakers rather than labeled with an ad hoc, non-standardized construction like, "You know, those tall trees with asymmetrical, serrated-edged leaves." To the extent that cognitive coding tends to be linguistic and tends to be efficient, the study of the referential use of standard, readily elicitable linguistic responses—or *terms*—should provide a fruitful beginning point for mapping a cognitive system. And with verbal behavior we know how to begin.

The beginning of an ethnographic task is the recording of what is seen and heard, the segmenting of the behavior stream in such a way that culturally significant noises and movements are coded while the irrelevant is discarded. Descriptive linguistics provides a methodology for segment-

ing the stream of speech into units relevant to the structure of the speaker's language. I assume that any verbal response which conforms to the phonology and grammar of a language is necessarily a culturally significant unit of behavior. Methodologies for the structural description of non-verbal behavior are not correspondingly adequate in spite of important contributions in this direction by such persons as Pike and Barker and Wright. By pushing forward the analysis of units we know to be culturally relevant, we can, I think, more satisfactorily arrive at procedures for isolating the significant constituents of analogous and interrelated structures. The basic methodological concept advocated here—the determination of the set of contrasting responses appropriate to a given, culturally valid, eliciting context—should ultimately be applicable to the “semantic” analysis of any culturally meaningful behavior.

### *Segregates*

A terminologically distinguished array of objects is a *segregate*. Segregates are categories, but not all categories known or knowable to an individual are segregates by this definition. Operationally, this definition of a segregate leaves a problem: how do we recognize a “term” when we hear one? How do we segment the stream of speech into category-designating units?

The segmentation of speech into the grammatically functioning units revealed by linguistic analysis is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for terminological analysis. Clearly no speech segment smaller than the minimal grammatical unit, the morpheme, need be considered. However, the task requires more than simply a search for the meanings of morphemes or other grammatical units. The items and arrangements of a structural description of the language code need not be isomorphic with the categories and propositions of the message. Linguistic forms, whether morphemes or larger constructions, are not each tied to unique chunks of semantic reference like baggage tags; rather it is the use of speech, the selection of one statement over another in a particular socio-linguistic context, that points to the category boundaries on a culture's cognitive map.

Suppose we have been studying the verbal behavior accompanying the selection and ordering of items at an American lunch counter.<sup>3</sup> The following text might be typical of those overheard and recorded:

“What ya going to have, Mac? Something to eat?”

<sup>3</sup> Because this is a short, orally presented paper, suggested procedures are illustrated with rather simple examples from a familiar language and culture. A serious analysis would require much larger quantities of speech data presented in phonemic transcription.



"Yeah. What kind of sandwiches ya got besides hamburgers and hot dogs?"

"How about a ham 'n cheese sandwich?"

"Nah . . . I guess I'll take a hamburger again."

\* \* \*

"Hey, that's no hamburger; that's a cheeseburger!"

The problem is to isolate and relate these speech forms according to their use in naming objects. Some, but apparently not all, orderable items at a lunch counter are distinguished by the term *something to eat*. A possibility within the range of 'something to eat' seems to be a set of objects labeled *sandwiches*. The forms *hamburger*, *hot dog*, *ham 'n cheese sandwich*, and *cheeseburger* clearly designate alternative choices in lunch-counter contexts. A customer determined to have a 'sandwich' must select one of these alternatives when he orders, and upon receipt of the order, he must satisfy himself that the object thrust before him—which he has never seen before—meets the criteria for membership in the segregate he designated. The counterman must decide on actions that will produce an object acceptable to the customer as a member of the designated segregate. The terminological status of these forms can be confirmed by analysis of further speech situations, by eliciting utterances with question frames suggested to the investigator by the data, and by observing non-verbal features of the situation, especially correlations between terms used in ordering and objects received.

In isolating these terms no appeal has been made to analysis of their linguistic structure or their signification. *Sandwich* is a single morpheme. Some linguists, at any rate, would analyze *hot dog* and even *hamburger* as each containing two morphemes, but, since the meaning of the constructions cannot be predicted from a knowledge of the meaning of their morphological constituents, they are single "lexemes" or "idioms." *Ham 'n cheese sandwich* would not, I think, qualify as a single lexeme; nevertheless it is a standard segregate label whose function in naming objects cannot be distinguished from that of forms like *hot dog*. Suppose further utterances from lunch-counter speech show that the lexically complex term *something to eat* distinguishes the same array of objects as do the single morphemes *food* and *chow*. In such a case, a choice among these three terms would perhaps say something about the social status of the lunch counter and its patrons, but it says nothing distinctive about the objects designated. As segregate labels, these three frequently-heard terms would be equivalent.

Although not operationally relevant at this point, the lexemic status of terms bears on later analysis of the productivity of a terminological system. In contrast, say, to our kinship terminology, American lunch-counter terminology is highly productive. The existence of productive,

polylexemic models such as *ham 'n cheese sandwich* permits the generation and labeling of new segregates to accommodate the latest lunch-counter creations. However, the non-intuitive determination of the lexemic status of a term requires a thorough analysis of the distinctive features of meaning of the term and its constituents. Such an analysis of the criteria for placing objects into categories can come only after the term, together with those contrasting terms relevant to its use, has been isolated as a segregate label.

### *Contrast Sets*

In a situation in which a person is making a public decision about the category membership of an object by giving the object a verbal label, he is selecting a term out of a set of alternatives, each with classificatory import. When he asserts "This is an X," he is also stating that it is *not* specific other things, these other things being not everything else conceivable, but only the alternatives among which a decision was made. In lunch-counter ordering, 'hamburger,' 'hot dog,' 'cheeseburger,' and 'ham and cheese sandwich' are such alternatives. Any object placed in one of these segregates cannot at the same time belong to another. Those culturally appropriate responses which are distinctive alternatives in the same kinds of situations—or, in linguistic parlance, which occur in the name "environment"—can be said to *contrast*. A series of terminologically contrasted segregates forms a *contrast set*.

Note that the cognitive relation of contrast is not equivalent to the relation of class exclusion in formal logic and set theory. The three categories 'hamburger,' 'hot dog,' and 'rainbow' are mutually exclusive in membership. But in writing rules for classifying hamburgers I must say something about hot dogs, whereas I can ignore rainbows. Two categories contrast only when the difference between them is significant for defining their use. The segregates 'hamburger' and 'rainbow,' even though they have no members in common, do not function as distinctive alternatives in any uncontrived classifying context familiar to me.

### *Taxonomies*

The notion of contrast cannot account for all the significant relations among these lunch-counter segregates. Although no object can be both a hamburger and a hot dog, an object can very well be both a hot dog and a sandwich or a hamburger and a sandwich. By recording complementary names applied to the same objects (and eliminating referential synonyms such as *something to eat* and *food*), the following series might result:

- Object A is named: *something to eat, sandwich, hamburger*
- Object B is named: *something to eat, sandwich, ham sandwich*
- Object C is named: *something to eat, pie, apple pie*
- Object D is named: *something to eat, pie, cherry pie*
- Object E is named: *something to eat, ice-cream bar, Eskimo pie.*

Some segregates include a wider range of objects than others and are subpartitioned by a contrast set. The segregate 'pie' *includes* the contrast set 'apple pie,' 'cherry pie,' etc. For me, the segregate 'apple pie' is, in turn, sub-partitioned by 'French apple pie' and 'plain (or 'ordinary') apple pie.' Figure 1 diagrams the sub-partitioning of the segregate 'something to eat' as revealed by naming responses to objects A–E.<sup>4</sup>

Again it is the use of terms, not their linguistic structure, that provides evidence of inclusion. We cannot consider 'Eskimo pie' to be included in the category 'pie,' for we cannot discover a natural situation in which an object labeled *Eskimo pie* can be labeled simply *pie*. Thus the utterance, "That's not a sandwich; that's a pie," cannot refer to an Eskimo pie. Similar examples are common in English. The utterance, "Look at that oak," may refer to a 'white oak' but never to a 'poison

something to eat					
sandwich		pie		ice-cream bar	
ham-burger	ham sandwich	apple pie	cherry pie	Eskimo pie	
OBJECTS:	A	B	C	D	E

Figure 1 Sub-partitioning of the segregate 'something to eat' as revealed by naming responses to objects A-E.

oak.' A 'blackbird' is a kind of 'bird,' but a 'redcap' is not a kind of 'cap.' For many English speakers, the unqualified use of *American* invariably designates a resident or citizen of the United States; consequently, for such speakers, an 'American' is a kind of 'North American' rather than the converse. One cannot depend on a particular grammatical construction, such as one of the English phrasal compounds, to differentiate consistently a single cognitive relation, such as that of inclusion. Because English is not unique in this respect, the practice of arguing from morphological and syntactic analysis directly to cognitive relations must be considered methodologically unsound.

Segregates in different contrast sets, then, may be related by in-

<sup>4</sup>This example is, of course, considerably over-simplified. If the reader does not relate these segregates in the same way as our hypothetical lunch-counter speakers, he is not alone. Shortly after I completed the manuscript of this paper, a small boy approached me in a park and, without any eliciting remark whatsoever on my part, announced: "Hamburgers are more gooder than sandwiches." One could not ask for better evidence of contrast.

clusion. A system of contrast sets so related is a *taxonomy*. This definition does not require a taxonomy to have a unique beginner, i.e., a segregate which includes all other segregates in the system. It requires only that the segregates at the most inclusive level form a demonstrable contrast set.

Taxonomies make possible a regulation of the amount of information communicated about an object in a given situation (compare: "Give me something to eat" with "Give me a French apple pie a la mode"), and they provide a hierarchal ordering of categories, allowing an efficient program for the identification, filing, and retrieving of significant information. The use of taxonomic systems is not confined to librarians and biologists; it is a fundamental principle of human thinking. The elaboration of taxonomies along vertical dimensions of generalization and horizontal dimensions of discrimination probably depends on factors such as the variety of cultural settings within which one talks about the objects being classified, the importance of the objects to the way of life of the classifiers, and general properties of human thinking with regard to the number of items that the mind can cope with a given time.<sup>5</sup> Determining the precise correlates of variations in taxonomic structure, both intraculturally and cross-culturally, is, of course, one of the objectives of this methodology.

In order to describe the use of taxonomic systems and to work out their behavioral correlates, evidence of complementary naming must be supplemented by observations on the socio-linguistic contexts that call for contrasts at particular levels. One could, for example, present a choice between objects whose segregates appear to contrast at different levels and ask an informant to complete the frame: "Pick up that——." Suppose we have an apple pie on the counter next to a ham sandwich. The frame would probably be completed as "Pick up that pie." If, however, we substitute a cherry pie for the ham sandwich, we would expect to hear "Pick up that apple pie." Variations on this device of having informants contrast particular objects can be worked out depending on the kind of phenomena being classified. Some objects, such as pies and plants, are easier to bring together for visual comparison than others, such as diseases and deities.

Another device for eliciting taxonomic structures is simply to ask directly about relations of inclusion: "Is X a kind of Y?" Since in many speech situations even a native fails to elicit a term at the level of specification he requires, most, if not all, languages probably provide explicit methods for moving up and down a taxonomic hierarchy:

<sup>5</sup> At least in formal, highly partitioned taxonomic systems an ordering of superordinates according to the number of their subordinates appears to yield a stable statistical distribution (the Willis distribution) regardless of what is being classified or who is doing the classifying.

"Give me some of that pie." "What kind of pie d'ya want, Mac?"

"What's this 'submarine' thing on the menu?" "That's a kind of sandwich."

Once a taxonomic partitioning has been worked out it can be tested systematically for terminological contrast with frames such as "Is that an X?" with an expectation of a negative reply. For example, we could point to an apple pie and ask a counterman:

1. "Is that something to drink?"
2. "Is that a sandwich?"
3. "Is that a cherry pie?"

We would expect the respective replies to reflect the taxonomy of lunch-counter foods:

1. "No, it's something to eat."
2. "No, it's a pie."
3. "No, it's an apple pie."

(Admittedly it is easier to do this kind of questioning in a culture where one can assume the role of a naive learner.)

In employing these various operations for exploring taxonomic structures, the investigator must be prepared for cases when the same linguistic form designates segregates at different levels of contrast within the same system ('man' vs. 'animal,' 'man' vs. 'woman,' 'man' vs. 'boy'); when a single unpartitioned segregate contrasts with two or more other segregates which are themselves at different levels of contrast ("That's not a coin; it's a token." "That's not a dime; it's a token.');

and when incongruities occur in the results of the several operations (terminological contrasts may cut across sub-hierarchies revealed by complementary naming; explicit statements of inclusion may be less consistent than complementary naming).

### *Attributes*

Our task up to this point has been to reveal the structure of the system from which a selection is made when categorizing an object. When you hand a Navajo a plant specimen, or an American a sandwich, what is the available range of culturally defined arrays into which this object can be categorized? Methodological notions of contrast and inclusion have enabled us to discern some structure in this domain of cognitive choices, but we still have not faced the problem of how a person decides which out of a set of alternative categorizations is the correct one in a given instance. How does one in fact distinguish a hamburger from a cheeseburger, a chair from a stool, a tree from a shrub, an uncle from a cousin, a jerk from a slob?

A mere list of known members of a category—however an investi-

gator identifies these objects cross-culturally—does not answer this question. Categorization, in essence, is a device for treating new experience as though it were equivalent to something already familiar. The hamburger I get tomorrow may be a quite different object in terms of size, kind of bun, and lack of tomatoes from the hamburger I had today. But it will still be a hamburger—unless it has a slice of cheese in it! To define ‘hamburger’ one must know, not just what objects it includes, but with what it contrasts. In this way we learn that a slice of cheese makes a difference, whereas a slice of tomato does not. In the context of different cultures the task is to state what one must know in order to categorize objects correctly. A definition of a Navajo plant category is not given by a list of botanical species it contains but by a rule for distinguishing newly encountered specimens of that category from contrasting alternatives.

Ideally the criterial attributes which generate a contrast set fall along a limited number of dimensions of contrast, each with two or more contrasting values or “components.” Each segregate can be defined as a distinctive bundle of components. For example, the plant taxonomy of the Eastern Subanon, a Philippine people, has as its beginner a contrast set of three segregates which together include almost all of the more than 1,400 segregates at the most specific level of contrast within the taxonomy. This three-member contrast set can be generated by binary contrasts along two dimensions pertaining to habit of stem growth (see Table 1). Applications of componential analysis to pronominal systems and kinship terminologies have made this method of definition familiar. The problem remains of demonstrating the cognitive saliency of componential solutions—to what extent are they models of how a person decides which term to use?—and of relating terminological

Table 1 DEFINING ATTRIBUTES OF THE CONTRAST SET OF STEM HABIT IN THE SUBANUM PLANT TAXONOMY

Contrast Set	Dimensions of Contrast	
	Woodiness	Rigidity
<i>gayu</i> ‘woody plants’	W	R
<i>sigbet</i> ‘herbaceous plants’	$\overline{W}$	R
<i>belagen</i> ‘vines’		$\overline{R}$

attributes to actual perceptual discriminations. As a case of the latter problem, suppose we learn that informants distinguish two contrasting plant segregates by calling the fruit of one ‘red’ and that of the other ‘green.’ We set up ‘color’ as a dimension of contrast with values of ‘red’ and ‘green.’ But the terminology of ‘color’ is itself a system of segregates whose contrastive structure must be analysed before color terms can serve as useful defining attributes of other segregates. Ulti-

mately one is faced with defining color categories by referring to the actual perceptual dimensions along which informants make differential categorizations. These dimensions must be determined empirically and not prescribed by the investigator using stimulus materials from his own culture. By careful observation one might discover that visual evaluation of an object's succulence, or other unexpected dimensions, as well as the traditional dimensions of hue, brightness, and saturation, are criterial to the use of "color" terms in a particular culture.

Whether aimed directly at perceptual qualities of phenomena or at informants' descriptions of pertinent attributes, any method for determining the distinctive and probabilistic attributes of a segregate must depend, first, on knowing the contrast set within which the segregate is participating, and, second, on careful observations of verbal and non-verbal features of the cultural situations to which this contrast set provides an appropriate response.

This formulation has important implications for the role of eliciting in ethnography. The distinctive "situations," or "eliciting frames," or "stimuli," which evoke and define a set of contrasting responses are cultural data to be discovered, not prescribed, by the ethnographer. This stricture does not limit the use of preconceived eliciting devices to prod an informant into action or speech without any intent of defining the response by what evoked it in this instance. But the formulation—prior to observation—of response-defining eliciting devices is ruled out by the logic of this methodology which insists that any eliciting conditions not themselves part of the cultural-ecological system being investigated cannot be used to define categories purporting to be those of the people under study. It is those elements of *our informants'* experience, which *they* heed in selecting appropriate actions and utterances, that this methodology seeks to discover.

### *Objectives*

The methodological suggestions proposed in this paper, as they stand, are clearly awkward and incomplete. They must be made more rigorous and expanded to include analyses of longer utterance sequences, to consider non-verbal behavior systematically, and to explore the other types of cognitive relations, such as sequential stage relations and part-whole relations, that may pertain between contrast sets. Focusing on the linguistic code, clearer operational procedures are needed for delimiting semantically exocentric units ("lexemes" or "idioms"), for discerning synonymy, homonymy, and polysemy, and for distinguishing between utterance grammaticalness (correctly constructed code) and utterance congruence (meaningfully constructed message). In their present form, however, these suggestions have come out of efforts to

describe behavior in the field, and their further development can come only from continuing efforts to apply and test them in ethnographic field situations.

The intended objective of these efforts is eventually to provide the ethnographer with public, non-intuitive procedures for ordering his presentation of observed and elicited events according to the principles of classification of the people he is studying. To order ethnographic observations solely according to an investigator's preconceived categories obscures the real content of culture: how people organize their experience conceptually so that it can be transmitted as knowledge from person to person and from generation to generation. As Goodenough advocates in a classic paper, culture "does not consist of things, people, behavior, or emotions," but the forms or organization of these things in the minds of people. The principles by which people in a culture construe their world reveal how they segregate the pertinent from the insignificant, how they code and retrieve information, how they anticipate events, how they define alternative courses of action and make decisions among them. Consequently a strategy of ethnographic description that gives a central place to the cognitive processes of the actors involved will contribute reliable cultural data to problems of the relations between language, cognition, and behavior; it will point up critical dimensions for meaningful cross-cultural comparison; and, finally, it will give us productive descriptions of cultural behavior, descriptions which, like the linguists' grammar, succinctly state what one must know in order to generate culturally acceptable acts and utterances appropriate to a given socio-ecological context.



## 6 Comment on "The Ethnographic Study of Cognitive Systems"



Harold C. Conklin

PROFESSOR CONKLIN'S COMMENT ON THE FRAKE ARTICLE IMMEDIATELY preceding (11:5) needs no introduction, since the relation between them has been explained in the Gladwin and Sturtevant preface to the previous selection. It might be helpful to add, however, that some instructive comparisons may be explored between these suggestions by Conklin and the analysis of taxonomic thought presented in Volume I by George Gaylord Simpson (1:6).

Dr. Frake has provided a very clear statement of certain recent efforts to improve ethnographic techniques for analyzing cognitive systems. While it is evident that some of the notions discussed in his paper derive from linguistic theory, as well as from principles developed first in biology and psychology, the methodological suggestions in it are of significance primarily to the ethnographer. Two major points seem to be of particular importance:

1. The demonstration of the *necessity*, for accurate and productive ethnography, of going beyond the identification and mere cataloguing

SOURCE: From Thomas Gladwin and William C. Sturtevant (editors), *Anthropology and Human Behavior* (Anthropological Society of Washington, 1962), pp. 86-92. Reprinted with the permission of the author and the Anthropological Society of Washington.

Harold C. Conklin (b. 1926) is Professor of Anthropology and Chairman of his Department at Yale University. A prolific fieldworker who is known as a pioneer in the accurate ethnographic study of systems of cultivation, he is also a leader in the study of ethnoscience. Among his publications are *Hanunóo Agriculture* (1957) and such articles as "Lexicographical Treatment of Folk Taxonomies" (1962) and "Ethno-genealogical Method" (1964).

of linguistic forms to the point where crucial structural semantic relations can be described systematically; and

2. The demonstration of the *need* for nonintuitive, but intraculturally designed, and rigorously applied, procedures for defining the basic elements and essential relations in the cognitive map of a people studied ethnographically. Implicitly and explicitly, Frake has illustrated the pitfalls of (a) cross-linguistic semantic matching; (b) the use of prearranged, response-defining eliciting techniques; and (c) the assumption of environmental absolutes.

In working from overt public labels to the culturally significant "objects" in the environment, there are four specific points which I think deserve underscoring:

1. The importance in ethnographic investigations of treating the semantic relations among segregates in a manner separate from the analysis of the phonology and grammar of the language concerned.

2. The importance of distinguishing those conceptual principles which generate systems of obligatory categories—and upon which there is unanimous agreement—from those principles and resulting categories which are less obligatory, or optional, or *irrelevant*.

3. The importance of distinguishing informants' direct responses from informants' actual uses of terms as indicators of important cognitive categories.

4. The importance—in analyzing folk taxonomies—of distinguishing the implications of vertical, hierarchic relations of class inclusion from those of contrast and subcategory intersection among folk taxa at the same level in a particular subhierarchy.

Some of the problems now facing the student of such aspects of ethno-science as Frake has discussed can be subsumed under the following headings:

1. Methods for more precise delineation and evaluation of significant categories in terms of *minimal lexical units*—taking into consideration various types of complexity (unitary lexemes, composite lexemes, etc.) and various types of synonymy, polysemy, and homonymy, under conditions of controlled contrast.

2. Methods for delimiting the boundaries of significant semantic domains.

3. Methods for evaluating the relevant distinctions of order, or rank, of subsets within significant cognitive domains.

4. Methods of determining the types of articulation among multiple and interlocking hierarchies. (A segregate may not be restricted to only one hierarchy.)

5. Methods of determining different types of *contrast* relations between segregates in the same lexical subset. (In addition to antonymy and to simple dyadic and triadic contrast, such relationships may entail

continuous, repetitive, reticulating, or discontinuous but sequential arrangements. The paradigmatic relations of some lexical domains have been relatively well explored, but for many others, the analysis of sublexemic, multidimensional contrasts has not yet begun.)

6. Methods of analyzing those areas of folk classification in which 'part of' and 'stage of' relations replace those of inclusion (i.e., 'kind of' relations).

This last point is of considerable interest and complexity. There may be several types of part-to-whole relations in any cognitive system. To illustrate some of the distinctions involved, we can consider the segregate labels:

<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>
<i>being</i>	<i>body</i>	<i>man</i> <sup>1</sup> (person)
<i>animal</i>	<i>head</i>	<i>man</i> <sup>2</sup> (male persons)
<i>mammal</i>	<i>face</i>	<i>bone</i>
<i>dog</i>	<i>eye</i>	<i>skull</i>
<i>bulldog</i>	<i>eyeball</i>	<i>tooth</i>
	<i>pupil</i>	<i>molar</i>
		<i>cusp</i>

In comparing lists *A* and *B*, note that any member of the segregate *bulldog* is also a member of each higher terminologically-distinguished class in the partial, five-level hierarchy indicated in *A*, whereas such a statement regarding the relations obtaining among the listed categories in *B* is possible. In *C*, inclusion and part-whole relations alternate.

To illustrate some of these points, and to indicate the important difference between the analysis of semantic structure and the presentation of an arbitrary arrangement, we can take a very familiar set of segregate labels, namely the terms used to designate the means of monetary exchange which we carry with us in wallet, pocket or purse.

Excluding a large number of referential synonyms, and designations for high denomination currency and for two-dollar bills (all of which are of restricted, specialized, or very uncommon occurrence), the following nine common segregate labels would certainly be recorded by any careful ethnographer:

1. dime	(d)
2. fifty-cent piece	(f)
3. five	(v)
4. nickel	(n)
5. one	(o)
6. penny	(p)
7. quarter	(q)
8. ten	(t)
9. twenty	(w)

It should be noted that no common object of monetary exchange is excluded from this set of mutually exclusive and unanimously-agreed-

upon categories. The large number of easily-determined contrastive attributes displayed by this array of common objects suggests many possible arrangements of these segregates other than the meaningless alphabetical listing above. For purposes of simple identification, numerous procedures may be established, described, and diagrammed. A different arrangement may be required to indicate the folk taxonomic relations obtaining among these conventionally labeled categories. Consider the two sets of diagrams in Figure 1 (where lower case letters correspond

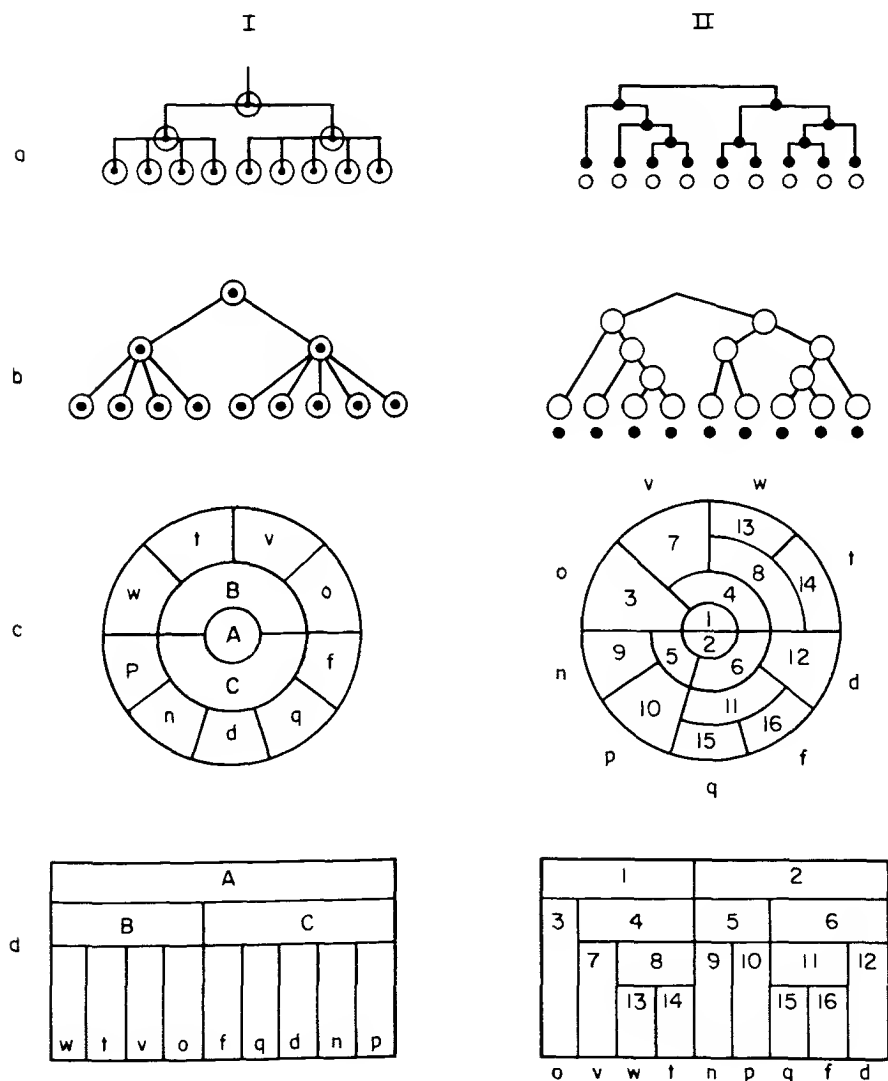


Figure 1

to the nine parenthesized symbols in the list above). Set I—where A — *money* (i.e., cash), B — *bill(s)*, and C— *coin(s)*—consists of four alternative representations of 12 English monolexemic segregate labels in a folk taxonomic subhierarchy. Set II—where arabic numerals correspond to those in the square brackets below—consists of four alternative representations of eight “couplets” of opposed attributes (corresponding to the 1a-to-8b “leads” below) which may be used to “key out” or identify any relevant object (coin or bill) as a member of one or another of our nine terminal folk taxa:

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 1a | Shape, rectangular [1]                     |   |
| 2a | Engraved portrait frame, broken oval [3]   | o |
| 2b | Engraved portrait frame, unbroken oval [4] |   |
| 3a | Hair, black [7]                            | v |
| 3b | Hair, white [8]                            |   |
| 4a | Neckpiece, black [13]                      | w |
| 4b | Neckpiece, white [14]                      | t |
| 1b | Shape, discoidal [2]                       |   |
| 5a | Edge, smooth [5]                           |   |
| 6a | Portrait profile, smooth-faced [9]         | n |
| 6b | Portrait profile, bearded [10]             | p |
| 5b | Edge, ridged [6]                           |   |
| 7a | Reverse, with bird [11]                    |   |
| 8a | Denomination, 13 letters [15]              | q |
| 8b | Denomination, 10 letters [16]              | f |
| 7b | Reverse, without bird [12]                 | d |

Comparing this partial analysis of our folk classification of money with an arbitrary key to the same terminal segregates (Sets I and II, respectively) illustrates a number of important, but not always obvious, features. If we are concerned with the way in which a set of categories is cognitively interrelated contrastively and hierarchically, detailed examination of physically observable differences in an array of objects cannot—by itself—provide decisive answers to questions of cognitive distinctiveness. That in Set II the opposition [1] : [2], but not [5] : [6] or [11] : [12], corresponds to an important cultural and cognitive distinction (B : C) can only be established by intracultural analysis as reflected in Set I. Furthermore, although I will not explore this aspect here, the exclusive relevance of color, size, and weight within contrast set C and of conspicuous arabic numerals and engraved human figures in contrast set B, is of considerable cognitive importance while most of the distinctions noted in Set II diagrams—however valid for identificational purposes—are arbitrarily selected and of no demonstrable cultural significance except to specialists in mintage and numismatics.

Looking at Figure 1, one notes that the branching dendrograms (a) and tree structures (b), as well as the circular and block diagrams (c),

(d) are similar in both columns. This geometric similarity can be misleading, because the implied relations between connected nodes and juxtaposed enclosures are very different in the two sets, although vertically within each column the diagrams are completely transformable. These differences between Set I and Set II, which are those distinguishing a folk taxonomic *hierarchy* from a *key*, can be summarized as follows:

- (1) Nodes or spaces in Set I necessarily represent culturally significant and conventionally-labeled segregates; those in Set II do not.
- (2) Node or space relations in Set I necessarily imply hierarchic class inclusion vertically; those in Set II do not.
- (3) Node or space placement in Set I is nonarbitrary and hence fixed positionally; node or space placement in Set II is based on arbitrary selection and hence such points can be permuted in their vertical or sequential ordering.

Despite the simplicity of this example, it does focus our attention on the importance of distinguishing between esthetically appealing and culturally valid statements regarding semantic structure.

While many problems remain, and while it may still be some time before a *complete* and adequate cognitive mapping is presented for any particular culture, Frake's preliminary formulation is a most welcome sign of the direction in which more rigorous ethnographic methods, including the study of cognitive systems, may be expected to develop.

## 7 "Emics," "Etics," and the "New Ethnography"



Marvin Harris

WITHOUT DENYING THAT COGNITION PLAYS A MAJOR ROLE IN THE CULTURAL process, the author of this selection raises some of the serious epistemological and methodological problems arising from the focus on cognitive orientations. In other of his publications, particularly those dealing with "race," Marvin Harris has shown that socioculturally determined cognition is much more "real" than any so-called objective truth of biological variation. On the other hand, as an anthropologist who has worked in a variety of cultures, Harris is skeptical about approaches which place primary reliance on "getting into the informant's head." What is more, he is equally suspicious of attempts to understand and analyze culture in terms of normative rules said to be cognized by individuals.

While he is strongly opposed to essentially linguistic models of culture (see II:5 and II:6), Harris has taken some key concepts from modern linguistics, although he has altered them to fit his own needs. His concept of "etics" applies to series of actually observed behavioral bits. The concept is derived, via the linguist Kenneth Pike, from the concept of phonetic, which applies to actual minimal sound bits that are combined to achieve meaningful utterances. Contrasted with etic is "emic" which, for Harris, relates to generalized statements about behavior, usually idealizing or otherwise distorting observable reality. This concept is derived, via the same route, from the linguistic concept of the phonemic, which applies to generalized statements about sound in which a number of recognizably distinct sounds are generalized into a single classificatory and descriptive phoneme.

*Another way of putting what Harris is driving against, is to raise the question of culture as a compendium of rules. Harris objects to rule-based approaches to culture on two grounds. He maintains that rule violation is at least as common as is adherence and thus questions the significance of such rules. He also wonders about the methodological propriety of attempting to derive rules from conversation with one or even a few informants. In this respect his criticism is like that made of some culture-and-personality work (see II:49). Harris' criticisms also bridge the gap between arguments about the nature of culture and basic problems of fieldwork procedure which occupy us in the next section.*

At mid-century there arose within cultural anthropology a movement dedicated to the improvement of standards of ethnographic descriptions and analysis, having as its source and inspiration the techniques of linguistics. This movement, for which the name the "New Ethnography" has been proposed, originated at Yale and has spread rapidly throughout the United States. Known variously as "ethnolinguistics," "ethnoscience," or "ethnosemantics," its manifest appeal lies in its promise to achieve the precise and highly operationalized paradigmatic renderings of cultural phenomena which have come to be associated with the linguist's descriptions of phonology and grammar. Its covert appeal, however, is that it carries forward the tradition of cultural idealism in anthropology while supplying that tradition with impressive new scientific credentials. These credentials are fully merited within certain domains and under certain restrictions which I will shortly attempt to specify. In larger perspective, however, the movement suffers from the accumulated liabilities of the past two hundred years of cultural idealist thought.

As we have seen, a convergent, if operationally unsound, movement, based on the linguistic model, has arisen in France under the leadership of Lévi-Strauss. The primary aim of the present chapter is to show that the convergence toward the strategy embodied in the new ethnography derives from an epistemological outlook widely held among contemporary social scientists of many different theoretical persuasions. Despite its unique attachment to explicitly linguistic paradigms, there are certain epistemological assumptions, of questionable value, which link the new ethnography with schools as diverse as the Boasians, Culture and

SOURCE: Marvin Harris, *Rise of Anthropological Theory* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968), Chap. 20. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publisher.

Marvin Harris (b. 1927) is Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University. He has done fieldwork in Brazil and in Mozambique and is currently attempting to revolutionize the practice of fieldwork by utilizing all available electronic devices. A prolific writer, Harris includes among his recent books *The Nature of Cultural Things* (1964), and *Patterns of Race in the Americas* (1964).



Personality, French structuralism, and both varieties of British functionalists. In order to demonstrate this convergence and in order to locate the new ethnography in relationship to the "old ethnography," we are obliged to undertake a discussion of the difference between emic and etic research options.

Recourse to the emic/etic dichotomy is imperative if we seek to identify the prospects of cultural materialism within the context of modern social science. The concepts of emics and etics provide an epistemological and operational basis for distinguishing between cultural idealism and cultural materialism in an age dedicated to eclectic middle-ground theories. In order to evaluate the historical significance of these eclectic preferences, certain epistemological issues must be confronted, at the deepest level of research design, rather than at the level of socio-cultural hypotheses and theories. We have already pointed to the need for this confrontation in discussing the way in which techno-economic and techno-environmental data have been "emicized" on behalf of the disproof of economic determinist theories. A similar "emicization" of social structural phenomena is also common. In order for there to be a fair test of the cultural materialist strategy, the predominantly emic corpus of extant ethnography must be supplemented by etic descriptions.

### *Pike's Definitions*

The terms themselves were coined by the missionary linguist Kenneth Pike on analogy with the "emic" in *phonemic* and the "etic" in *phonetic*. In conformity with this analogy, Pike stressed "the structural results" obtained by phonemic analysis as opposed to the "nonstructural" results characteristic of phonetics. From a linguistic point of view, etic analyses cannot achieve structural results, since a purely etic *system* of sound differences is inconceivable. With all deference to the linguistic origin of the dichotomy, a nonlinguist must object to Pike's extrapolation of the correlation between etics and nonstructural results to nonverbal behavior. What does "structure" mean in this context? To avoid tautology, it must be taken as suggesting something like the "order in an orderly arrangement." Structure is the order in a system. The pairing of structural results with emics and nonstructural results with etics accords with the history of linguistics. But there is no reason to suppose that this equation must hold for nonlinguistic phenomena. There are structures in an atom, a molecule, a cell, and an organism, the description of none of which depends upon emic operations. Why should we not also assume that there are sociocultural systems whose structure can be exposed independently of procedures modelled after phonemic analysis? Pike's failure to make provision for this alternative was rooted deeply in religious convictions which cannot

be ignored if one wishes to understand *his* meaning. It is of course possible to utilize etic categories which will not contribute to an understanding of socio-cultural systems. But many phonological analyses, because of poor technique, also end up with partial or spurious structures.

In further defining the consequences of the two approaches, Pike elaborates a theme which he considers to be secondary, but which assumes primary importance as soon as we disregard the gratuitous equivalence between emics and structure. Outlining the operations for the identification of nonverbal emic units (behavioremes), he makes it clear that emic structure must correspond to the actor's "purpose" during the observed performance. That is, an emic description must be related to a set of logico-empirical procedures by which the actor's meaning and purpose is made known: "In spite of the problems which are involved, it is absolutely essential if one is to study behavior *as it actually functions*, that one assume that the analyst can detect the presence and to some degree the nature and meaning of purpose." The behavioreme itself is partially defined as "an emic segment or component of purposive human activity." Moreover, the same definitional ingredient is paramount in an extensive quote from Edward Sapir, who is regarded by Pike as having anticipated the distinction at issue:

It is impossible to say what an individual is doing unless we have tacitly accepted the essentially arbitrary modes of interpretation that social tradition is constantly suggesting to us from the very moment of our birth. Let anyone who doubts this try the experiment of making a painstaking report (i.e. an etic one) of the actions of a group of natives engaged in some activity, say religious, to which he has not the cultural key (i.e. a knowledge of the emic system). If he is a skillful writer, he may succeed in giving a picturesque account of what he sees and hears, or thinks he sees and hears, but the chances of his being able to give a relation of what happens, in terms that would be intelligible and acceptable to the natives themselves, are practically nil. He will be guilty of all manner of distortion; his emphasis will be constantly askew. He will find interesting what the natives take for granted as a casual kind of behavior worthy of no particular comment, and he will utterly fail to observe the crucial turning points in the course of action that give formal significance to the whole in the minds of those who do possess the key to its understanding.

It is the "formal significance" in the "minds" of the actors which needs to be stressed. The "created" significances of etic descriptions are not dependent upon the subjective "meanings" and "purposes" of the actors. Emic distinctions, on the other hand, require one to enter the world of purpose, meaning, and attitudes. Emic study "helps one to appreciate not only the culture or language as an ordered whole, but it helps one to understand the individual actors in such a life-drama—their attitudes, motives, interests, responses, conflicts, and personality development."

### *Definition of Emic*

In keeping with the broader uses to which the emic/etic distinction has been put and in the tradition which ties Pike to Sapir, I propose the following definition:

Emic statements refer to logico-empirical systems whose phenomenal distinctions or "things" are built up out of contrasts and discriminations significant, meaningful, real, accurate, or in some other fashion, regarded as appropriate by the actors themselves. An emic statement can be falsified if it can be shown that it contradicts the cognitive calculus by which relevant actors judge that entities are similar or different, real, meaningful, significant or in some other sense, "appropriate" or "acceptable."

### *Emics and Predictability*

At least two prominent advocates of the emic approach have insisted upon establishing unusual, and to my view, unacceptable criteria for verifying the truth content of emic statements. According to Charles Frake:

. . . an ethnography should be a theory of cultural behavior in a particular society, the adequacy of which is to be evaluated by the ability of a stranger to the culture (who may be the ethnographer) to use the ethnography's statements as instructions for appropriately anticipating the scenes of the society. I say "appropriately anticipate" rather than "predict" because a failure of an ethnographic statement to predict correctly does not necessarily imply descriptive inadequacy as long as the members of the described society are as surprised by the failure as is the ethnographer. The test of descriptive adequacy must always refer to informants' interpretations of events, not simply to the occurrence of events.

A similar position is adopted by Harold Conklin who also specifies "appropriate anticipation" rather than prediction. Since no attention has been devoted to the question of how to proceed with this operation, it cannot be taken at once both literally and seriously.

### *The Native's Point of View*

The unsatisfactory formulation of emic predictability (to which of course not all ethnosemanticists would subscribe) need not deter us from setting rather clear-cut limits to the logico-empirical domains embraced by emic studies. It is convenient to begin by demarcating two broad, overlapping subfields: The first is concerned with semantic and communication phenomena; the second, with inner psychological states and

feelings. All phonological, grammatical, and semantic analyses carried out by linguists and ethnographers constitute emically oriented studies. Regardless of how one chooses to define phonemes, the range of sounds involved must produce systematic sound contrasts which are significant to the native speaker. Similarly, in stating the rules by which grammatical utterances are generated in a specific language, the "test of adequacy" is the native speaker's intuitive knowledge of the grammaticality of the sample utterances generated according to such rules.

It is a fundamental premise of linguistic analysis that the phonemic system or the grammatical rules need not correspond to the analysis which the native speaker is usually capable of performing. Indeed, the native speaker may emphatically reject the linguist's analysis. That analysis does not therefore cease to be the product of logico-empirical operations in which emic distinctions provide the basis for subsequent logical manipulation as well as for the ultimate tests of logico-empirical adequacy.

"Componential analysis," an analytic procedure first employed by Ward Goodenough fits in here as an activity devoted to the formulation of the rules by which semantic domains are logico-empirically ordered. As in the case of phonemic and syntactic rules, the componential formula need not (one can say, probably never will) correspond to the rules which the native is capable of expressing. Goodenough's componential definition of an American's grandmother's second husband goes something like this: a kinsman less than two degrees collateral distance, at two units of genealogical distance; in lineal relationship; in a senior generation; of male sex; in the presence of a marital tie; senior party involved; senior party being the first person in the particular relationship to become known to the junior party. Goodenough appears unconcerned by the possibility that some natives might not share his convictions concerning the adequacy of this definition. (Actually, few Americans can confirm or deny Goodenough's analysis from personal experience.) He comments:

One test of the adequacy of this account, I have said, is that it not do violence to my own feel, as informant, for the structure of what is described. This is the subjective test of adequacy. An equally important test is that it provide an alien with the knowledge he needs to use my kinship terminology in a way I will accept as corresponding with the way I use it. This is the objective test of adequacy. An account is deficient to the extent that it fails the test.

### *Other Communications Systems*

Another kind of ethnography which should be explicitly associated with the emic point of view is that which Birdwhistell has called "kinesics," the study of the communication functions of body motions.

At least some of the body motions of interest to Birdwhistell link up with the earlier field of gesture study and clearly constitute emic entities insofar as they involve the statement of the rules of a public communication *system*. The study of other body motions, such as the particular walking gait or sitting slump of a psychiatric patient, cuts across the second large category of emically oriented research shortly to be discussed and is not so easily classified.

It seems obvious that whenever we deal with phenomena that are part of a communication system, and that when our research program calls for "cracking" the code which the native communicators employ, then that program incorporates the strategy of emic studies. In this enterprise it is of no epistemological importance that the native users of the system know how to formulate the rules of the code. Humans share with other organisms the ability to communicate information without being able to say just how the communication task gets done. This is a most interesting psychological fact, but it does not alter the emic nature of the phenomena under consideration.

### *Inner Psychological States*

The second great domain of emic studies is concerned with the analysis of the behavior stream in terms of the intentions, purposes, motives, goals, attitudes, thoughts, and feelings of the culture carriers. Benjamin Colby has explicitly linked these phenomena with formal semantics by making them the object of "ethnographic semantics." "The ultimate goal is the understanding of the evaluations, emotions, and beliefs that lie behind word usage." Although not touched upon by Colby—he specifically rejects the suggestion that Morris Opler and Ruth Benedict are relevant—this is a universe regularly studied by psychologists as well as by social scientists.

Two traditions within psychology diverge with respect to the treatment of these phenomena. The division corresponds roughly to the emic/etic distinction in the social sciences. On the one hand there is the approach which emphasizes the validity of introspective descriptions and verbal reports of inner psychological states. On the other, there is the approach, represented by the major neobehaviorist learning theory schools, which systematically avoids dependence upon states or dispositions which cannot be defined by means of operations performed on the external parts and conditions of the behaving organism.

In ethnography, an emic approach to purposes, goals, motivations, attitudes, etc., is premised on the assumption that between the actor and the observer, it is the actor who is better able to know his own inner state. Furthermore, it is assumed that access to information concerning

the actor's inner state is essential for an understanding of his behavior and for a proper description of the behavior-stream events in which he participates. In most cases, this assumption is quite overt, and the postulation of the existence of such inner states is carried out on such a lavish scale, that there is no danger of mistaking the emic nature of the research. This is certainly true, whenever the ethnographer takes the familiar Boasian position that if only he had been brought up as a member of x tribe then his descriptions of purposes, goals, motives, etc., would be so much richer by virtue of being able to think and feel like a member of that tribe.

### *Confounding the Emic/Etic Distinction*

There are certain options which in their most subtle form defeat the emic/etic distinction. Thus it is a commonplace of psychoanalytical research and practice that the actor is regarded as a poor observer of his own inner state. The analyst's task is to penetrate behind the facades, symbols, and other defenses to the unconscious feelings and thoughts of which the actor is unaware. This much is etic: the analyst's statements are not falsified even if it is shown that the contrasts which he draws are not significant, meaningful, real, or appropriate from the point of view of the actor. On the other hand, there also seems to be an assumption that if the actor accepts the analyst's description as corresponding to his own "true" inner state, then verification has occurred. To that extent, psychoanalytic descriptions are emic. But it should be noted that this apparent defeat of the emic/etic distinction suffers a penalty in the form of a low standard of verifiability and a dubious empirical status. This penalty is always suffered by those who indiscriminately shift back and forth from emic to etic strategies.

### *Definition of Etics*

Let us now turn to a provisional definition of etics. Etic statements depend upon phenomenal distinctions judged appropriate by the community of scientific observers. Etic statements cannot be falsified if they do not conform to the actor's notion of what is significant, real, meaningful, or appropriate. Etic statements are verified when independent observers using similar operations agree that a given event has occurred. An ethnography carried out according to etic principles is thus a corpus of predictions about the behavior of classes of people. Predictive failures in that corpus require the reformulation of the probabilities or the description as a whole.

The definitions set forth here will be best clarified by viewing them

in the context of some of the major misconceptions which have attached themselves to the emic/etic distinctions.

### *Emics Not Necessarily Less Empirical than Etics*

In theory, an emic ethnography need be neither more nor less empirical, scientific, or intersubjective than an etic ethnography. Historically, of course, emic imponderables have been more prevalent than etic ones, if for no other reason than that almost all traditional ethnography is heavily biased in favor of an emic approach. There is no reason, however, why emic statements cannot be operationalized to the point of achieving high standards of intersubjectivity, verifiability, and predictability. Presumably, it is the upgrading of such standards which animates the current concern with rigorous paradigmatic treatments of emic phenomena.

### *Informants May Supply Emic or Etic Information*

The relationship between an etic perspective and the traditional dependency upon native informants for ethnographic information deserves special comment. An ethnography of etic statements is not incompatible with operations involving recourse to the information to which an informant has access by means of verbal exchanges with him. The critical issue here is whether the information in question is etic or emic information. It is emic if the informant's native distinctions, significances, and meanings provide the semantic ground for communication between him and the ethnographer. An example of the use of an informant to maximize the emic content of ethnography is Duane Metzger and Gerald Williams' "eliciting heuristic" method that involves a prolonged educational exposure during which the ethnographer teaches the informant how to teach the ethnographer to think in appropriate emic terms. An equivalent amount of effort can be (and often is) devoted to teaching the informant to think in the *ethnographer's* terms, as for example, when native assistants learn to measure fields, weigh harvests, take censuses, and describe past and present events in conformity with the categories of significance which the ethnographer has brought to the task. When an informant is used etically, he joins the community of observers. He becomes the ethnographer's assistant, part of a team which can produce more information in less time than one man working alone. If the behavior-stream events which he reports are scenes in which he himself is involved, then it is expected that his report of his own behavior will be as close as possible to that which would have been obtained had the scene been recorded on film and tape.

### *Emics Cannot Be Transmuted into Etics*

One of the categories of etic, "nonstructural" classifications foreseen by Pike allows for a mixture of emic and etic operations:

The units of behavior, though classified without reference as such to the individual systems from which they were abstracted, may nevertheless be classified in reference to the fact that they were in fact abstracted from purposive human behavior, so that elements of meaning or purpose constitute one of the sets of criteria for such etic classification.

This type of etic description is an anomaly for which there can be no epistemological justification. By admitting units which are simultaneously emic and etic, we reduce the distinction to the "anemic" status assigned to it by Gerald Berreman.

It is this misconception which led Sturtevant to make the historically misleading claim that Kroeber's 1909 treatment of the semantic dimensions of kinship was "the basic paper on the etics of kinship." The whole point of Kroeber's famous article was to replace Morgan's sociological treatment of kinship with a linguistic treatment. The eight "principles or categories of relationship" proposed by Kroeber are categories alleged to underly "the hundreds or thousands of slightly varying relationships that are or can be expressed by the various languages of man." If a semantic distinction is found in more than one culture this does not mean that such distinctions cease to be semantic in nature. Concepts such as filiation, agnation, territoriality, ownership, affinity, religion, unilineal descent group, etc. are applied in a wide variety of cross-cultural contexts. The test of whether these are emic or etic concepts resides in their logico-empirical relationship to cognitive processes. If the verifiability of an ethnographic statement involves a confrontation with cognitive adequacy or appropriateness, then we are dealing with emic categories, no matter how many cultures contribute to that confrontation. Identification of similar emic categories merely establishes such categories as cross-culturally valid logico-empirical abstractions; it does not transform them into etically derived phenomena. As we have seen, the data language of cultural and social anthropologists derives from a melange of emic and etic operations which it will undoubtedly take several generations to unscramble.

### *Kinship as a Mixed Domain*

The domain of kinship has not escaped this confusion between emic and etic phenomena. Floyd Lounsbury's assertion that "kin types" are a composite of the semantic discriminations made in many societies is historically inaccurate. Genealogical reckoning was not invented by



anthropology. The apparent success of a mating, reproduction, and genealogy frame for eliciting categorizations which are amenable to contrastive analysis has an etic basis: Mating, reproduction, and genealogical relationships have a rather precise biological meaning. The ethnographic mating, reproduction, and genealogy frame, however, is a lethal mixture of emic and etic categories. For a biologist, all fertile matings are equally relevant for tracing genealogical connections; for the ethnosemantics of kinship, only those matings and genealogical connections which occur in and through "marriage" are relevant. In order to elicit questions about kinship, the ethnographer must first discover an intercultural gloss for the particular kind of mating which in English goes by the name of "marriage." Incidentally, in the search for the native equivalent, it must be remembered that the informant, if he has not already fallen victim to a standardized equivalence, is also straining to find the proper gloss for the ethnographer's concept. Murdock defines the family in such a way as to commit us to a consideration of whether there is a "socially approved sexual relationship between a mated pair." Having children and feeding and housing them is an etic phenomenon, but doing it in a socially approved manner puts the whole matter in an eminently emic frame.

Lounsbury's "kin types" are thus etic and emic composites, and Goodenough's claim that the analogue of phonetic notation has already been developed for kinship studies is true only for the biological frame. It does not apply to the emic aspects of kinship. How else do we explain the seemingly endless quest for the meaning of marriage and descent? A recent exchange between David Schneider and John Beattie rests on the conviction that there must be a cross-culturally valid emic definition of kinship distinct from a biological genealogy; but they are unable to agree on what it might be. Beattie solves the problem in a highly instructive fashion:

What kinship as an anthropological concern is all about are those social relationships, whatever their social and cultural content, which the people who have them think about and talk about in the idiom of kinship.

Aside from the biological reproduction frame, the content of kin-types is emic and must always remain emic until the observers decide what bits of behavior (analogous to phones) will constitute the minimum etic definition of marriage and descent. It is an error of capital importance to suppose that the scrambling of the etic and emic components in the study of kinship will convert one into the other. Indeed, as far as American cultural anthropology is concerned, there is a strong presumption of cause and effect between this misconception and the fact that no consistent etic treatment of marriage and kinship has been attempted.

### *Can Emics Be Studied Etically?*

An etic approach, by definition, avoids the premises of the emic approach. From an etic point of view, the universe of meaning, purposes, goals, motivations, etc., is thus unapproachable. But to insist upon the separateness of emic and etic phenomena and research strategies is not to affirm a greater or lesser "reality" or a higher or lower scientific status for either of them.

### *Both Emic and Etic Data Can Be Studied Cross-Culturally*

It should be obvious that emic phenomena can be studied cross-culturally. The question of whether patrilineal descent rules or Omaha kinship terminology recurs in different societies has nothing to do with the emic/etic distinction per se. Rather what is involved is the setting of intersubjective standards of similarity and difference. Both emic and etic phenomena may be defined with an abundance of detail sufficient to confound an attempt to find replicative instances anywhere in the behavior stream. The previous chapters demonstrate, however, that a conscious and overt commitment to the study of inner meanings and psychic complexities has usually been associated with a considerable amount of indifference toward the quest for the scientific explanation of sociocultural differences and similarities. In the case of the new ethnography, the prevailing research strategy frequently seems to be unconcerned with whether new insights into diachronic and synchronic regularities will result from the higher standards of emic descriptions that are being developed at heavy costs in research and publication resources. Harold Conklin for example, has listed (1) appropriateness of anticipation, (2) replicability or testability, and (3) economy as the criteria by which ethnographic statements must be evaluated. A number of other ethnosemanticists have concerned themselves at length with the question of whether their models represent as closely as possible the way in which the natives actually think. But few if any of the ethnosemanticists have considered the question of how to distinguish important from unimportant ethnographic descriptions. With all due regard to the need for the widest latitude of interests in a common scientific endeavor, it cannot be said that an important ethnographic description is one which is merely accurate, elegant, and economical. Scientific ethnographic models pay their way to the extent that they link up with theories which explain diachronic and synchronic differences and similarities. Admittedly it is not always possible to know in advance when and how such a link-up will be achieved; but in the case of ethnosemantic studies there are a

number of historically demonstrated adverse considerations, of which the practitioners seem unaware.

### *Emics/Etics versus Ideal/Actual*

On superficial inspection the contrastive research strategies suggested by the well-worn phrases "ideal versus actual behavior" or "ideal versus actual culture" would seem to be aimed at the same distinction as that which is involved in emics versus etics. But the two sets of strategies do not share much in common; indeed they derive from very different epistemological positions. The ideal/actual distinction is not grounded in the consideration of how one can know that cultural things are what they are said to be by the ethnographer. Instead it merely assumes that there is one set of patterned regularities consisting of what people say or believe about what they do or should do and another set of patterned regularities concerned with what they "actually" do. In the ideal/actual contrast, the problem of specifying the operations by which one gets to know what people "actually do" is not even broached, whereas in the emic/etic frame this problem is fundamental. The entire weight of the latter dichotomy rests upon the epistemological significance of describing cultural things through categories and relations which are necessarily isomorphic with those appropriate or meaningful to the actors, as opposed to categories and relations which arise independently in the ethnographer's data language. Thus, actual behavior can be treated in both an emic and an etic fashion. An informant's description of what is actually happening at a festival, during a work scene, or inside a household need not correspond to what the ethnographer sees or would see in the same situations.

Let us take as an example the ideal behavior by which captains of certain Bahian fishing boats are said to locate the ocean spots over which their boats anchor and the fishing lines are dropped. Identification of the proper spot, as small as a room, seven or eight miles out at sea, is supposed to depend upon the lining up of two or more pairs of landmarks. The memorization and sighting of these landmarks is the special responsibility of the captain, whose reputation can be measured by the size of the catch, ability to attract and hold good crews, and keenness of memory and eyesight. Now it is quite possible to describe this whole complex as actual behavior in terms of the emically significant categories of spots, landmarks, eyesight, and memory. Indeed, one can *actually* see and hear the captain look for the landmarks, maneuver the boat into position, order the sails down and the anchor dropped; and one can actually watch the fishing commence over the "spot." Actual culture here corresponds to a large degree to ideal accounts of it. Both accounts

are emic. There is another way to look at the performance in question. The clue to this additional perspective resides in the fact that when the captain locates the spot and the men start to fish, they not infrequently fail to catch a single fish. On such occasions the captain explains that the fish aren't home, that they have gone visiting elsewhere, and he orders the boat off to another spot. The etics of the matter do not commit us to a description of this behavior in terms of the captain's emically appreciated skills. One also observes the constant use of a plumb line, and there is a widespread knowledge of the relationship between type of bottom, water depth, and type of fish likely to be found in broad zones as opposed to "spots." An etic account of the fishing complex includes a description of the patterns of behavior by which the captain maneuvers his craft, but the activity involved in his peering at the horizon does not carry the meaning it has in an emic account of actual behavior. Instead of accepting the emic version of actual culture as an adequate description of what it takes to be a successful captain of a fishing boat, the etic categorizations open quite a different ethnographic trail. An analysis of the relationship between age of captain, size of catch, and stability of crew reveals that younger, more active and vigorous men who don't drink, who work hard, and who manifest a "protestant" kind of behavior (an eminently etic category since they are all "Catholics") are the ones who are likely to be successful captains around whom the reputation for keen landmark sighting and good "spot memory" will develop.

Cultural anthropology will not easily overcome its heritage of ethnographies of actual behavior carried out in a manner which permits slipping back and forth from an emic to an etic frame in an unconscious and unpredictable fashion. The effect of the lack of attention to the emic/etic distinction has been especially deleterious in the ethnography of primitive and peasant economic systems where descriptions of essential economic processes have been obscured and distorted by emic descriptions of actual behavior. Malinowski's description of the Kula is a classic instance.

### *Should Etics Replace Emics?*

One no sooner suggests that an etic research option deserves special emphasis than he is represented as proposing that all studies of semantic domains, goals, and purposes should cease at once. Even if some advantage accrued to such a proposal, it is difficult to imagine a more unlikely development in the context of the research establishment's vested interests in emic matters. But no advantage would accrue to a research strategy concerned exclusively with etic phenomena. The whole

point of insisting upon etic studies is that one wishes to explain the emic universe to which as actors in our own culture we are ineluctably bound. Actually, the shoe is on the other foot. If there is danger of intradisciplinary imperialism whereby one strategy deliberately denies the validity of alternative research options, it is the etic approach which has suffered the effects of sweeping programmatic manifestos. Let it be recalled that Sapir declared that it was "impossible" to describe behavior-stream events in an etic data language. The declarations of Frake and Sturtevant, which are discussed below, are simply the latest in a long series of strategically extreme proposals directing the attention of cultural anthropologists away from the etic substance of human behavior. Comparably exclusionist proposals have never been made against emic studies.

### *Ambiguity and the Linguistic Model*

The fundamental error of the new ethnography is that it is based upon a patently false analogy between vernacular codes on the levels of phoneme, morpheme, and syntax on the one hand, and on the other, the higher-order codes which are in some way related to the semantics of everyday speech behavior and the historical unfolding of nonverbal behavior-stream events. In linguistic analysis, it is assumed in theory and followed in practice that the phonemic, morphemic, and syntactic descriptions of a language can be achieved by working with a very small group of informants. This procedure is justified by the empirically established fact of the uniformity of the sound discriminations which constitute the basis for verbal communication. Whatever else a speaker must accomplish, he must be able to convince his fellows that he has something to say that they could understand if they wanted to. The actor who speaks gibberish, who mumbles or garbles his words, who uses deviant pronunciations or otherwise fails to demonstrate that he is in a condition to deliver an intelligible message, is seldom accorded a serious audience (except for ceremonial or ritual performances in which paralinguistic codes bear the burden of the message). The lack of tolerance for such deviations emanates from the most primordial functional conditions underlying the evolution of language, whereby viable ratios of signal to noise have become established. These linguistic features evidently enjoy a selective advantage of the highest magnitude.

The theory and fact of vernacular communication on the level of pragmatics, however, point to another and opposite set of conditions. To be sure, many complex messages derive their functional significance from their high signal to noise ratio; however, there are also powerful psychological and sociocultural functions which are fulfilled by complex messages which are perfectly communicative on the phonemic, mor-

phemic, and syntactic levels, but ambiguous or quite unintelligible in other respects. Such messages are demonstrably characteristic of whole cognitive domains. The semantic ambiguity characteristic of such activities as poetry, art and literary criticism, eschatology, traditional philosophy, and theology in our own cultural experience cannot be dismissed as epiphenomenal or as subcultural variations. There is no reason to suppose that uniformity of understanding in such domains has a functional significance which outweighs the obvious benefits of ambiguity, obfuscation, and individual variation. What our ethnoscientists seem to be unprepared for is the contingency that in human cultural repertoires there may actually be more domains which derive their salient semantic order from ambiguity and variation than there are domains whose orderliness reflects consensus and uniformity.

Brazilian racial categories, of which several hundred have been discovered, constitute an example of an eminently ambiguous and highly idiosyncratic semantic domain. Precision and clarity in this domain would conflict with the main etic features of Brazilian social structure. A similar functional utility is associated with the emic definition of class in contemporary United States stratification hierarchies. The functional nature of the ambiguity in caste and kindred in Ceylon has been impressively demonstrated by S. J. Tambiak. It is unfortunate that Stanley Freed's methodologically advanced attempt to measure the degree of consensus concerning caste ranking in Uttar Pradesh fails to consider the possible functional significance of the considerable uncertainty which he shows does exist. Yet such an interpretation is clearly warranted by Bernard Cohn's description of caste mobility through litigation and violence. The structural significance of cognitive ambiguity is also implicit in Leach's analysis of the "gumsa" ideology of Kachin social structure. As Leach points out, "The ethically correct action for a Christian businessman is often equally ambiguous." Leach's conceptualization of matrilineal prescription involves a rigid dichotomization of wife-giving and wife-taking groups. According to William Wilder: "Granted the uniqueness and permanence of the mayu-dama relationship (the alliance set up by cross-cousin marriage), the whole kinship terminology falls into place as a consistent whole . . . ; *without that assumption the classifications are chaotic.*" It can be said with equal emphasis however that without the observed ambiguity in the mayu-dama ideology, Kachin social structure would be reduced to chaos.

The vast and acrimonious debate which has centered on the attempt to distinguish prescriptive from preferential marriage rules derives its monumental futility from the same error. Given the fact that 20 percent of the Purum alliances are contrary to the rule of matrilineal prescription, it seems likely that the mental state of some of the Purum is not

compatible with Rodney Needham's splendid certainty regarding how they should behave. It is interesting to note that Pike's advice on how to handle emic ambiguity has been largely ignored:

A theory of the structure of behavior must leave room for variants in both form and meaning, but without being able to provide any absolute measure of just how much alike or just how different either form or meaning or the form-meaning composite may be before one can no longer equate two items. In our present theory we state that the indeterminacy lies in the data, within the structure, and that any arbitrary attempt to force a decision one way or another in certain instances does violence to the structure rather than clarifying it.

In view of this admonition, the attempt to maximize the order in emic phenomena by regarding ambiguity as either inconsequential or as the result of error is a false strategy.

Before a domain is subjected to formal analysis, we must be told something about the generality of the distinctions and contrasts in terms of specific historic events and people. It is remarkable how little attention has been paid to this issue especially when one considers the importance of statistical data-gathering techniques among the operations of contemporary social psychology. Indeed, much of the new ethnography appears to be social psychology shorn of its statistical base. At least one ethnosemanticist, Goodenough, appears to have settled down with the data obtained from only one informant. Although Conklin reports that he obtained color naming responses from "a large number of informants," the relationship between individual responses and the four-way classification about which there is said to be "unanimous agreement" is not specified, despite the fact that this agreement exists side by side with "hundreds of specific color categories, many of which overlap and interdigitate."

Charles Frake reports that "informants rarely disagree in their verbal descriptions of what makes one disease different from another." It would seem important for us to know just what this "rarely" means. Did Frake's informants represent all Subanum actor types? Given the fact that medical expertise is seldom uniformly distributed in a population, it would not be unexpected that "rare" disagreement was frequent disagreement at least in certain sex and age categories.

### *Problem of the Well-Informed Informant*

Since much of the terminological data which provides the basis for the ethnosemantics of kinship derives from fieldwork that can no longer be repeated, there is little hope of correcting for overagreement in the "well-informed informants." My own encounter with individual variation and ambiguity in the terminology of the Bathonga of southern Moçam-

bique may serve as an example. Convinced by my reading of Radcliffe-Brown that I was dealing with an Omaha system, I shrugged off the responses of a half dozen informants until I finally found someone who "really knew" the system. The justification for this was that the Bathonga were undergoing intensive acculturation, in an area where a considerable mixture of Zulu, Ronga, and Shangane "tribes" was taking place. It seemed best to work with someone who remembered the old system. But Henri Junod, who had studied the Bathonga sixty years ago, had already noted four alternate terms for mother's brother's son: *makwabu* (sibling); *nwana* (child); *malume* (mother's brother); and *kokwana* (grandfather). What I encountered in some of my "ill-informed informants" was an even greater measure of confusion. Thus, while Junod attributed the substitution of the grandfather term (*kokwana*) for mother's brother (*malume*) as a dialect difference, I kept running across people who insisted that both *malume* and *kokwana* were appropriate! Now these departures from the Omaha system are of the precise order of difference which Lounsbury regards as requiring the establishment of separate subtypes of Crow and Omaha terminology. It may be that these variations can be handled as subcultural or dialect differences taking place inside of different heads. On the other hand, it is equally plausible that these variations take place inside the same head. Indeed, this is true for many Bathonga in the modern situation. If that is the case, then an "adequate" ethnography must express the ambiguity of the system, and it must do so statistically.

The way in which the emic formalists have handled this problem in the treatment of American kinship terminology is scarcely reassuring. Goodenough has referred to his "dialect" as a means of escaping the fact that *his* understanding of "correct" kin terminological usage does not correspond to *mine*. Several important foci of functionally important ambiguity in the American cognitive calculus of kinship probably get swept under the rug by this maneuver. One strongly doubts for example, that Goodenough's lumping of Fa Fa Fa Sb Ch and Fa Sb Ch Ch Ch along with Fa Sb Ch as "my first cousin" is merely a matter of dialect or subcultural variation. Is it a valid cognitive principle of American kinship that "first cousin" need not be included in the basic corpus of kinship terms because it is not a lexeme? Goodenough proposes that he is representative of significant numbers of Americans in believing that we cannot say, "No, he is my half brother" but that we can say "Yes, he is my half brother" in response to the question, "Is he your brother?" Such convictions mask the fact that many Americans have trouble applying kinship terms to relatives outside of a small span of kintypes with whom they have significant etic transactions. In this connection Schneider, who uses a more generously functional approach to the



question of American kinship, refers to the "fuzzy boundary and fadeout principles" but does not drive home the consequences of this fuzziness for a strategy which is inherently incapable of accommodating ambiguity.

Goodenough's assumptions need to be tested against sample population responses under standardized conditions. This is especially true of some of the basic themes which are taken as underlying the construction of a componential grid. For example, it is claimed that an American husband cannot disown his wife's child and keep his wife. Yet it is common knowledge in welfare circles that such cases frequently show up in adoption courts; it cannot be left to intuition to decide the rules by which Americans in general cognize extramarital pregnancies in wedlock.

A potentially important step has been taken by A. K. Romney and Roy D'Andrade in their use of samples of public high school students to obtain lists of kinship terms and other relevant responses. Unfortunately, the implications of their findings are not developed out of deference to the task of finding *the* correct set of rules in conformity with the linguistic model. Thus, in one of Romney and D'Andrade's samples, modifier terms which occurred with a frequency of less than 25 percent with a core term (e.g. *great* uncle) were excluded from consideration. Then, an additional simplification was achieved by excluding responses of subjects whose use of modifiers constituted a pattern found in less than 10 percent of the sample of 105. By this sloughing off of "idiosyncratic or variant" answers, the conclusion is reached that "cousin" in our terminology takes only one modifier, "second."

None of the attempts to define the basic cognitive features of American kinship terminology have thus far made concessions to the possibility that ambiguity is one of the salient characteristics of this domain. Wallace and Atkins, Romney and D'Andrade, and Goodenough each operate with a different inventory of basic American kinship terms. Variant treatments by David Schneider and Munroe Edmunson ought also to be considered in estimating the scope of the problem which has yet to be met head on. Conklin has suggested that American anthropologists who do not know their native terminology had better take steps to learn it. They are urged to consult:

an explanatory note on "The Mathematics of American Cousinship" in a recent issue of the Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers. There, the purpose in providing such a device is explicitly the resolution of a frequently met ambiguity and lack of common knowledge among American anthropologists as to the steps required in reckoning degrees of cousinship in English!

This advice carries an implicit warning concerning the kinship terminologies of the natives of other cultures: If you don't know your own minds, we'll teach you. In this vein, one is reluctant to share Dell Hymes's nostalgic reverie over "The nights of beer drinking and brain

wracking spent in the Rainbow Cafe at the edge of Warm Springs reservation" with Philip Kahclamet, "the most knowledgeable and fluent speaker of Wishram." There is also the experience reported by Anthony Wallace with a Japanese informant who brought along a friend "to check the accuracy" of her kinship definitions: "The informant never completely accepted our view that her task was to give personal usage; she felt that she was a representative of Japan and should be 'correct.'"

Among the ethnosemanticists, Hymes has cautioned against transferring data-gathering techniques appropriate to phonemics and grammar to higher-order semantic phenomena. Hymes sees an "ethnography of speaking" as providing the antidote for the lack of information about the settings and variations in speech behavior which derive from "the implicitly normative stance long characteristic of linguistic theory in prescribing its object." He goes on to point out that other functions fulfilled by agreement about referential meaning are not always the prime function of speech behavior:

(e) From the standpoint of a general theory of language and its functioning, it is simply the case that *some* of the functions of languages in communities do call for approximation to independence of context, simply uniformity, and primacy of organization about the function of reference, three assumptions so common to descriptive linguistic theory—and *some do not*.

It is to be hoped that Hymes's suggestions for placing the study of speech behavior in a more realistic and more ample functional context will be given the attention they merit. In the meantime, the failure of American ethnologists to agree on the analysis of their own native terminology, the evident tendency among ethnosemanticists to accept the cognitive expertise of the well-informed informant, and the failure to accommodate the possibility of functional ambiguity suggest that the ethnosemanticists must take a more critical look at their basic assumptions. The brilliant efforts lavished upon placing second cousin, half brother, and grand niece in a single paradigmatic semantic space may actually result in a serious distortion of emic facts. At the very least, the difficulties and shortcomings of the treatment of American terminology provide a firm basis for skepticism regarding the attempt to push the study of major terminological systems into the numerous refinements which are possible if terms for kin types representing all shades of ambiguity, psychological, and social significance are jammed into the same frame.

### *Emics and Actual Verbal Behavior*

Consideration must be given to the prominence of operations involving artificial eliciting situations in the construction of the formal

analyses of the new ethnography. This has meant that much of the basic data employed consist of verbal statements in which people say what they would say under given hypothetical circumstances. As Frake has put it: "Given a set of contrasting disease names, the problem remains of determining the rules which govern the assigning of one name rather than another in a particular diagnostic situation." This is the problem of referential as distinct from abstract meaning. For example, most Brazilians verbally agree on the contrasts out of which rules for distinguishing between a "preto" ("black") and a "branco" ("white") can be constructed. Yet these rules are demonstrably inadequate for predicting when a specific individual will call another "preto" or "branco." In real life a whole new set of factors enter which may involve calculi from domains far removed from "racial" categories. Thus as Hymes implies, there is an air of scholasticism or of armchair detachment about much of the formal analysis of the new ethnography, even when we restrict ourselves to the question of the rules which govern *verbal* behavior-stream events. It is as if a generation of anthropologists had never observed hesitation, "change of mind," "groping for the right word," argument, lying, puzzlement, and many other ordinary speech phenomena.

### *Emics and Nonverbal Behavior*

But social and cultural anthropology enjoy a more ample scientific mandate than the study of what people say they will say. There remains the question of what they say they will do, and of the relationship between these sayings and the nonverbal happenings of history.

Now whatever the force of the points which I have raised concerning the appropriateness of the linguistic model for verbal behavior, the application of that model to nonverbal behavior is even more powerfully ill-advised. Evidence of both a logical and empirical nature from many different quarters and cultures indicates that emic rules of behavior are a poor guide to historical events and etic regularities in economic, social, and political subsystems. If permitted to develop unchecked, the tendency to write ethnographies in accord with the emic rules of behavior will result in an unintentional parody of the human condition. Applied to our own culture it would conjure up a way of life in which men tip their hats to ladies; youths defer to old people in public conveyances; unwed mothers are a rarity; citizens go to the aid of law enforcement officers; chewing gum is not stuck under tables and never dropped on the sidewalk; television repairmen fix television sets; children respect their aged parents; rich and poor get the same medical treatment; taxes are paid in full; all men are created equal; and our defense budget is used only for maintaining peace. Elsewhere it would

turn the Chinese family into a Confucian fantasy; invent Hindu farmers who starve in order to avoid harming their sacred cows; spread the idea that the Portuguese have no racial prejudice; and convince a whole generation of introductory anthropology students that the Zuni never get drunk. If Jules Henry's recent study of American culture is at all accurate, American anthropologists should be especially skeptical of ethnographies in which the rules of behavior dominate the rules for breaking rules. Commenting upon the pervasiveness of cheating among American school children, Henry writes: "An honest adolescent life could be a crippling preliminary for many phases of contemporary culture." Granted that this may be a specialty of industrial civilization, it nonetheless poses an empirical question which cannot be left unanswered when Panglossian grammars are attempted for other cultures.

In attempting to demonstrate that the grammar of normative status and role behavior among the Trukese is not "an exercise in sterile formalism," Goodenough presents the case of a father who struck his married daughter. This act violated five of the six rules in Goodenough's emic "Duty Scale": Trukese fathers should crouch or crawl if a married daughter is seated; they should avoid initiating action; honor any request; avoid speaking harshly; and never assault the daughter "regardless of provocation." Instead of being dismayed by the discovery that all of these rules were flouted right before his eyes, Goodenough takes comfort from the fact that the woman in question had in turn been breaking another series of rules! "Her petulant behavior had been getting on her kinsmen's nerves for some time. . .," and she had indulged in "an early morning tirade against her husband whom she suspected of having just come from an amorous visit to her lineage sister next door." It was therefore "poetic justice," remarks Goodenough, for the woman's father to hit her: "A good hard jolt was just what she deserved," he says. It seems to me that Goodenough derives the wrong moral from this episode. So blatant a failure of a set of rules to predict behavior requires a rewriting of the rules. Just how often do these good hard jolts get delivered? And do the injured ladies agree with the anthropologist that a good hard jolt is just what they need? Referring to the accomplishments of ethnosemantics listed by Frake, Berreman notes:

None of these descriptions, whatever the virtues, can in themselves be called very significant . . . they remind of Mills' warning that many sociologists have gotten to the point where they overlook what is important in their search for what is verifiable . . . many have worked so hard on what is trivial that it comes to appear important. . . .

### *Emics and the Science of Trivia*

It is no accident that formal analysis has so often been taken to task for its involvement with trivia. It is probably only with respect to

statistically insignificant or scientifically trivial performances that behavior-stream events can be predicted from a small set of emic rules. The insistence by Frake, Conklin, and Goodenough that "appropriateness or acceptability" be substituted for predictability among the canons of good ethnography is nothing so much as a tacit admission of this dilemma. The problem is not that behavior is not governed by cognitive plans, maps, rules, themes, ideologies, etc. Since these phenomena take place inside of people's heads in great abundance and on all sort of conscious, preconscious, and unconscious levels with all degrees of strength and persistence, and in all manner of logical or illogical, rational or irrational combination, it would be most unlikely that at some level, in some degree, and in some combination, behavior-stream events were not based on or at least accompanied by some form of cognitive calculus. In all societies, concrete manifestations of behavior, verbal or nonverbal, result from complicated interactions of specific personalities whose repertoires of rules, especially when it comes to the rules for interpreting or breaking rules, often seem to have little in common. Unless the new ethnographers are a breed apart, they must surely have noted by this time that their lives have consisted largely of trying to figure out what rules one ought to live by or, what amounts to the same thing, what rules one ought to invoke in a particular situation. There is little indication that the normal condition of social life is one in which conformity to emic norms predominates. The judgment expressed by Hugo Nutini that "mechanical models" (i.e. models constructed out of ideal behavior) "are always superior to statistical models" (i.e. models constructed out of actual behavior) is dangerously detached from empirical foundations. There is no evidence which indicates that under "the proper cultural conditions"—whatever these may be—"the overlapping of ideal and actual behavior would tend to the ideal limit." Instead, there is a vast literature in anthropology and related disciplines which indicates that emic norms and etic events never quite match and that not infrequently the main function of the norms is to obscure the etic reality. A case in point is Marshall Sahlins' suggestion about how to resolve the "E.-P. (Evans-Pritchard) paradox" wherein, as among the Nuer, there is an inverted relation between commitment to agnation in principle and commitment to it in deed: "Then too, the agnatic dogma may only be strengthened by a deepening contradiction with kin group membership, as ideology undertakes its Mannheimian function of keeping people from knowing what's going on in the world."

I hasten to acknowledge certain recent attempts to link formal analysis with social structural or comparative generalizations. It would appear on balance, however, that the net contribution to substantive theory is less than what usually results from equivalent labor in-puts. For example, Conklin's conclusion that the Hanunóo's terminological spe-

cialization in cousin terms reflects payment of fines in accordance with degrees of incest scarcely requires the elaborate descriptive apparatus with which it is juxtaposed.

### *The Case of Crow Terminology*

Among formal analysts, the most ambitious claim for sociological significance has been set forth by Floyd Lounsbury. Lounsbury suggests that Crow and Omaha kinship terminologies and their variants, including Trobriand, are best understood as expressions of the extension of nuclear family terminological categories outward to other kin types on the basis of what he calls "status successions." It is the passing on of statuses such as "head of family, other positions in the domestic group, headship of lineage or kin-based corporation, hereditary political office, religious office, etc." which accounts for the overriding of generational distinctions typical of Crow and Omaha terminologies. This principle is set forth in opposition to that endorsed by Leach, derived from Radcliffe-Brown, subscribed to by Lowie, Murdock, and White, and ultimately traceable to Morgan, that Crow and Omaha terminologies reflect first and foremost the alignment of people into unilinear groupings.

In the first place, we should note that Lounsbury's interpretation at no point contradicts the principle of lineage solidarity; instead his "status successions" might all be viewed as measures of the degree of lineage corporateness. But Lounsbury is really not interested in his analysis as a means of discovering the causal ingredients in the evolution of kinship systems. What he actually tries to show is that given the Crow-type terminologies it is possible to write rules for extending nuclear family kin-terms which "account for" the system. These rules account for *all* of the terminology, whereas the principle of lineage solidarity accounts for only the bulk of the terms, leaving certain residues which are anomalous (as when certain Crow-types call ego's Fa Mo Br by a general grandfather term rather than Fa). The disparity in completeness, however, is not a legitimate test of theoretical adequacy. Lounsbury is privileged to keep adding transformation rules precisely until the point is reached at which all of the features of the particular case have been taken care of. In writing these rules, Lounsbury chose not to employ an extensional principle which explicitly incorporates or depends upon the principle of lineage solidarity. Instead he employs such principles as "skewing rules," "half-sibling rule," and "merging rule." In rejecting the established lineage principle, Lounsbury makes no sustained attempt to evaluate the possibility that the terminological phenomena it does not account for are sociologically or statistically insignificant, or semantically ambiguous or that the principle could be made to account for them with minor addenda. As we have seen, the Bathonga's Omaha terminology

involves ambiguities at a number of points. Similar alternate manifestations are regarded by Lounsbury as having separate sociological significance. Furthermore, although admitting the general correlation between strong lineage principle and Crow-Omaha terminologies, Lounsbury chooses to emphasize the fact that there are five deviant cases in which Crow terminologies are associated with patrilineal descent. He does not elect to study these cases in the light of the special conditions which, had he done so, would, for at least three of the instances, permit an interpretation perfectly compatible with the lineage principle.

### *Three Ethnographic Cases*

These three cases deserve our attention because they are indicative of what happens when supersophisticated formal analyses are reared on a foundation of shoddy primary materials.

Lounsbury cites Murdock as the source of three of his five cases in which Crow terms occur with patrilineal descent and patrilocal residence. These are the Bachama of Nigeria, Koranko of Sierra Leone, and Seniang of the Solomon Islands. First of all, it must be made perfectly plain that Murdock's definition of a Crow terminology is scarcely the equivalent of what Lounsbury is interested in subjecting to formal analysis. For Murdock, the Crow form exists when cross cousins are distinguished from parallel cousins and siblings, while the Fa Si Da is classed with Fa Si *and/or* the Mo Br Da with Br Da. This says nothing about the treatment of the uncle and aunt terms in relationship to each other and to Mo and Fa, and little about these uncle and aunt terms in relation to the sibling and cousin terms. Turning to the Bachama in the original source, we find not only that Fa Si and Mo Si are terminologically equated, but that Mo Br, Fa, and Fa Br are also terminologically equated. Worse, the terms for both kinds of grandmothers and grandfathers are the same as those used for cross uncle and for father's elder brother. As for the patrilineality of the Bachama, Meek makes it perfectly clear that a form of double descent is operating; that the sister's son inherits horses, goats, clothes, cash, and cattle, and the mother's brother's widow or her brideprice, his standing crops, and the contents of his granary; and that the system was in transition from an earlier form of still greater emphasis upon "mother right" in which: "The sense of kinship with the mother's family was undoubtedly in former times greater than that with the father's family."

Turning to the Koranko we find that the Fa Si Da is *not* equated with Fa Si although the rest of Murdock's conditions are met. The system thus barely survives as Crow by virtue of invoking the *and/or* in the definition. It is incredible, however, to discover in the setting of the refined analysis presented by Lounsbury an appeal to this ethnographic

case. The Koranko terminology appears as part of a foldout in which the terminological systems for eight Sierra Leone peoples are set forth in tabular fashion. The only statement specifically concerned with Koranko descent and locality is herewith reproduced: "Descent is reckoned in the male line, and there are no clear traces of the existence of matrilineal marriage, though some of the birth customs seem to suggest it." The ethnographic standard of Thomas's account is unacceptable (except in a large sample), and any attempt to hinge an important theoretical issue on the Koranko is as good as resorting to scapulimancy.

Finally, there is the Seniang division of Malekula, subtitled, "A Vanishing People in the New Hebrides." It is relevant to point out that not only had the Seniang been afflicted by the worst sort of biocultural collapse at the time of A. B. Deacon's (1934) visit, but that the monograph in question was put together from Deacon's field notes by Camilla Wedgewood who comments:

. . . it must be stressed here that, far from finding a living society, Deacon found at South-West Bay only relatively few survivors of several districts. He was therefore unable here to study the social, economic, and religious life of a living community, but had to acquire his knowledge of what that life had once been by means of the tedious and not wholly reliable method of questioning the older men.

The Seniang satisfy Murdock's criteria for Crow terminology. Fa Si Da is classed with Fa Si and Fa Si So with Fa, but there is no information concerning the terms for the children of these cross cousins. Because of this and other gaps it is difficult to assess the strength of the Crow pattern. There is at least one anomaly: Wedgewood directs special attention to the fact that Fa Fa Fa Fa is called by the term for elder brother and that So So So So is probably called by the term for younger brother. This is not the kind of terminology on the basis of which one would predict strong matrilineal or matrilineal clans, although admittedly it also is not at all suggestive of the reported rather strong patrilineal and patrilineal principles. Additional reasons for rejecting Malekula as a negative case for the correlation in question arise on all sides. The neighboring Newun with whom the Seniang intermarry and who recognize descent from each other's localized patrisibs classify Fa Si with Fa Si Da but the same root term is also used for Mo. The classification of Mo, Fa Si, and Fa Da under the same term is repeated among many of the other Malekulan groups, including the Lambumbu, Senbarei, Uripiv, Nesan, Uerik, Bangasa, and Niviar. This is a most un-Crow-like feature and is certainly not provided for by Lounsbury's subtypes. It should be mentioned that definite traces of double descent crop up to north among the Lambumbu and Lagalag although nothing like a reliable description is anywhere available concerning relations with matrilineal kinsmen. Both Deacon



and Wedgewood were convinced that Malekula has been invaded by a succession of different cultures, the last of which were strongly patrilineal. To what extent this may have obscured the observation of de facto matrilineal groupings among the Seniang is unclear. Similarly in doubt is Deacon's ability to have salvaged information of such a nature from the cultural wreckage in which he was working, even if it had occurred to him that the Crow cousin terminology required special attention in the light of the heavy patri-bias which he attributed to the entire island. One point is clear, however: this is not a very convincing case of anything.

### *The Quest for Formal Elegance*

The critical test of Lounsbury's thesis concerning the shortcomings of the lineage solidarity principle hinges on the question of whether a set of emic rules can be written which build upon or incorporate the lineage principle and which will be as productive and parsimonious as Lounsbury's. Allan Coult claims to have done just that. Starting with a set of principles first proposed by Tax, and adding the principle of lineage solidarity, Coult says that he "accounts for" all of the features which Lounsbury "accounts for," and that he does it in a more simple and elegant fashion. Coult disposes of the anomalies in the relationship between lineage membership and terminological lumping by applying logical, as opposed to sociological, principles: "the terms applied to relatives outside of either own or M's patriline are determined, given the terms applied within these two lines, and the operation of the principles of uniform succession and uniform reciprocals."

But the significance of Coult's achievement is not to be judged by these purely formalistic criteria. As Coult himself expresses it, "A good theory should be phrased in such a way that not only can it predict empirical phenomena, but the reasons why it predicts should also be apparent." That is, as stated earlier, a good ethnographic description must link up with a corpus of explanatory theory. "Lounsbury in fact has no theory, he has merely a set of empirically observed relationships. . . ."

### *The New Old Ethnography*

Formal analysis presents itself as a new and revitalizing movement, whereas, in fact, it is actually the latest in a series of cultural-idealist proposals for intensifying cultural anthropology's commitment to emic research strategies. The "new approach to ethnography," what Sturtevant is tempted to call "the New Ethnography," has a definite and highly compromised historical position of which its practitioners seem unaware. In one important sense, this is not the new ethnography,

but the new old ethnography. It is a better operationalized but narrower version of a research strategy which has already proved itself incapable of solving the major substantive issues of the social sciences.

In evaluating ethnosemantics' claim to newness, we must bear in mind the fact that almost every major theoretical school in anthropology has expended the bulk of its research effort in the pursuit of some form of emic analyses. The main historical lines of influence have been set forth in the previous chapters. Here it must suffice merely to mention the heritage of what Lowie has called the Southwest German School of Philosophy—Windelband, Dilthey, Rickert—which transmitted eighteenth-century rationalism and idealism through its Hegelian culmination into contemporary anthropology. In the twentieth century many prominent spokesmen representing a nominally wide variety of theoretical positions have exhorted anthropologists to give priority to emic analysis. Among the Boasians, Lowie's opinion is especially unequivocal:

The field worker's business is always and everywhere to understand the true inwardness of the beliefs and practices of the people he studies. He is not content to record that infants are suffocated, aged parents abandoned, or enemies eaten. Unless he can also recover the accompanying sentiments, he has failed in his task.

Gluckhohn may be taken as representative of another broad spectrum of American anthropologists: "The first responsibility of the anthropologist is to set down events as seen by the people he is studying." Malinowski, in the *Argonauts*, wrote of "the final goal, of which the ethnographer should never lose sight."

This goal is, briefly, to grasp the native's point of view of his relation to life, to realise his vision of *his* world. To study the institutions, customs, and codes or to study the behavior and mentality without the subjective desire of feeling by what these people live, of realising the substance of their happiness—is, in my opinion, to miss the greatest reward which we can hope to obtain from the study of man.

Furthermore, although David Schneider contrasts Radcliffe-Brown's position on social structure with that of Needham, Lévi-Strauss, and Homans, the common heritage which the structuralists and the structural-functionalists derive from Durkheim provides a common emic bias for both groups. The overwhelming commitment among contemporary British anthropologists to the analysis of descent, affinity, filiation, prescriptive and preferential alliance should suffice to establish the emic thrust of their research interests. On the other side, as we have seen, Lévi-Strauss and Needham have carried Durkheim's notion of "collective representations" to the purest pinnacle of mentalism. As Schneider points out, even the question of social *order* is for Needham a question of underlying logical and symbolic congruence. Although Needham

writes about "groups pragmatically distinguished," "the word pragmatic can only make sense if it is taken to mean 'conceptually,' and this in turn can mean that some native will talk about it. A figment of a figment of a figment of a native's imagination will do."

### *Convergence toward Mentalism*

It is a fact of salient importance, however, that the emic bias of the new ethnography derives its vigor from an infusion of a mentalism which has more recent origins. The new ethnography represents a confluence of the interests of the older empathetic, humanist, emic approach with a newer, narrower, and less humanistic mentalism arising out of linguistics. Hymes has traced this influence in terms of Sapir, the "Yale School: complementary distribution, and Jakobsonian distinctive features, and Chomskyian generative grammar." The linguistic model has also been influential among French and British anthropologists who have been led by a remarkable convergence toward an emic strategy in which logic and reason have taken the place of emotional meaning. In Europe, again specifically influenced by Jakobson, it is Lévi-Strauss who has led the way to this new form of idealism. Although formal analysis is deeply committed to the image of "hard science," it has its precise parallel in the structuralist position of Lévi-Strauss, whose essence Murphy has captured in the inspired phrase, "Zen Marxism." For Lévi-Strauss as for the ethnosemanticists, a quasimathematical, linguistic model should be the model for all cultural analysis: "language can be said to be a condition of culture because the material out of which language is built is of the same type out of which the whole culture is built: logical relations, oppositions, correlations and the like." Frake's image of ethnography precisely parallels this view:

. . . descriptive linguistics is but a special case of ethnography since its domain of study, speech messages, is an integral part of a larger domain of socially interpretable acts and artifacts. It is this total domain of "messages" (including speech) that is the concern of the ethnographer. The ethnographer, like the linguist, seeks to describe an infinite set of variable messages as manifestations of a finite shared code, the code being a set of rules for the socially appropriate construction and interpretation of messages.

It will be seen that Lévi-Strauss' "incredible ingenuity" in discovering the hidden mental structures of society is the French analogue of Frake's invocation: "We must get inside our subjects' heads." When one takes into consideration the objections which have been raised concerning the lack of statistical validation of the mental structures which ethnosemantics has sought to discover, the gap between Lévi-Strauss and the new ethnography narrows still further. Lévi-Strauss' justification of the so-called mechanical model parallels the arguments

employed by ethnosemantics to justify a lack of concern with sampling and prediction. As I have already indicated, the mentalism of Lévi-Strauss and his American counterparts departs from previous emic approaches in laying stresses upon the logical functions of mind as opposed to the emotional and irrational components: "Lévi-Strauss emphatically rejects recourse to effectivity or emotion. Emotion is vague, where structure is precise, merely sentimental where structure is logical." An implicit disdain for the emotional events which go on inside of people's heads is also a conspicuous hallmark of ethnosemantics. Emics for a previous generation of American anthropologists meant the discovery of the unconscious psychological complexes which were assumed to underly ideal and actual behavior. The linguistic model, however, has no means of accommodating the Freudian conflict between id, ego, and superego. One might as well try to squeeze blood from a stone as obtain from Hammel's "algorithmic" masterpiece on Comanche kinship, the kinds of emotions the Comanche experienced in the presence of their sisters and mothers. It is indeed a new experience for anthropologists to be exposed to an analysis which "does not pretend to offer solutions which have sociological, psychological or historical relevance in any necessary sense. . . ."

### *Back to Plato*

Another novel ingredient in the ethnosemantic approach is the exclusionist insistence that anthropology must be emic if it is to be anything at all. Although idealism and mentalism have always dominated our outlook, this was traditionally combined with an eclecticism by which at least one anthropological foot could touch the ground. In the past, emic commitments have seldom been so blatant, insistent, and parochial. Earlier idealist and mentalist programs were pragmatically capable of and interested in describing and explaining techno-economic, social, and political systems on the basis of concrete historical events. In the new ethnography, however, culture is a timeless system of logical categories. Hegel's historicism, his only redeeming feature, has been dropped in favor of a synchronic idealist dialectic known as "distinctive feature analysis." Although the ethnosemanticists enjoy the illusion that they are deriving nourishment from new springs of wisdom, even as idealists they may actually have taken a giant step backward. Thus, according to Goodenough:

The great problem for a science of man is how to get from the objective world of materiality, with its infinite variability, to the subjective world of form as it exists in what, for lack of a better term, we must call the minds of our fellow man. . . . Structural linguistics has, I think, made us conscious, at last, of their nature, and has gone on to convert this consciousness into a systematic method.

The notion that the objective world of materiality represents the shadowing forth of the forms which exist in the mind takes us all the way back to Plato's cave. Goodenough fails to consider that although materiality is infinitely complex, this is a condition which has not inhibited the development of generalization in all the other sciences, none of which have had to search out subjective worlds of form. Furthermore, as I have already indicated, if the subjective world of form appears less infinitely variable, it is because the ethnosemanticists have ignored the variability which each of us knows exists. Goodenough's rejection of the material world as too complex reflects an opinion which is widely shared (more in conversation than in print) that ethnography must be emic, and emic in the new linguistic sense, if it is to be anything at all. Indeed, there is the insistence by some of the ethnosemanticists that the cultural field of inquiry is only definable in emic terms: "Actually, I find it difficult to conceive of any act, object, or event which can be described as a *cultural* artifact, a manifestation of a code, without some reference to the way people talk about it."

### *Cultures Are More than Codes*

Are all cultural artifacts—acts, objects, or events—as Frake puts it, only conceivable as manifestations of a code? Referring to the earlier discussion of variation and ambiguity, let me rejoin that acts, objects, or events relevant to the human behavior stream seldom express one or a few simple code rules. Some examples will be helpful at this point. Among the Bathonga there is a strong agnatic bias with a rule that brothers and sons rear their families within or immediately adjacent to their father's compound. Many additional rules stress the order in which brothers and sons are to marry, the allocation of lineage brideprice resources, the treatment of co-wives and of junior sons. There are additional rules which refer to how to make witchcraft, how to make accusations of witchcraft, and how to react to such accusations. There are still more rules which indicate how a man is to become successful in life, the importance of plural marriage, the importance of having many children. All of these rules are in turn related to rules for treating the ancestors with proper respect and attention. Now it is a regular etic feature of Bathonga life that the local lineage fissions, when population exceeds 100 or 200 people, that the break involves the establishment of new households with a junior son and his mother at the core, and that the break is accompanied by all sorts of hostile expressions, including witchcraft accusations, which violate the rules of lineage solidarity, but which give the young man a chance to achieve a measure of success in life and marriage that he could not otherwise hope to achieve. To regard the fission event as a result of the intersection of all of the codes that

might conceivably have influenced the behavior of the agnates, elder and younger brothers, junior and senior wives, as they wrestled each in their own way with the problem of which rule to invoke, or as the rules themselves intersected on some unconscious level in an untraceable skein of guilt and anxiety in each of the actors, is a hopeless task. The fission of the Bathonga homestead is a cultural event and is *not* conceivable in any operational sense as a manifestation of a code. On the contrary, it is simply and clearly and operationally conceivable as an etic phenomenon in which the rate of fission expresses not a mental code, but the density and spacing of the animal and human population under the techno-environmental conditions of southern Moçambique.

A similar but highly quantified example is found in Roy Rappaport's study of the relationship between secondary growth, sweet potato production, the pig and human populations, warfare, and major pig-slaughtering festivals among the Maring of New Guinea. Each of these activities has its emic rules, which cross each other at numerous points. Thus pigs are to be fed with inferior grades of sweet potatoes. But as the pig population goes up, the pigs consume more and more of the labor input that goes into the sweet potato crop. There is no rule among the Maring that pigs should multiply to the point of menacing the human calorie ration. Yet without specifying the cyclical etic regularities in the ratio between pigs, people, and garden lands, the ethnography of Maring warfare and feasting behavior cannot be properly described, i.e., it cannot be linked up with a corpus of diachronic and synchronic theory.

Among the ethnosemanticists, Frake has gone so far as to attempt to treat the interaction between a human group and its habitat primarily in emic terms. Noting that there is no explicit rule among the Subanum by which their settlement pattern can be accounted for, Frake proposes to derive the implicit rule from the intersection of a number of "quite explicit principles about the desirable relations among houses and fields." The analysis is presented largely as a methodological proposal and hence starts off with the major features of the agricultural system as given. But we are assured that these givens, for example, that new swiddens are started every year, can also be derived from a calculus of emically informed individual decisions. Three emic rules are offered by which an emic "accounting" of settlement pattern is to be achieved: minimum number of wild vegetation boundaries; minimum houses to swidden distance; and maximum house to house distance. These rules, even with the givens of no larger than nuclear family work groups and an annual shift in locus of the main swidden input, are obviously incapable of predicting (as distinguished from "accounting for") the spatial distribution of Subanum households. Even if they all invoke the same rules at the same time in Subanum land, it cannot be that

everyone gets the same result in terms of size of household, size of swidden, and productivity of swidden. Somewhere the emic rules must confront the etic reality of how much is produced under the given techno-environmental conditions. Whatever else must be taken into consideration, it is obvious that the diminishing returns for labor input must figure prominently in the etic formula governing house site shifts among swidden farmers. It is symptomatic of the mentalism and formalism of the ethnosemanticists that Frake does not describe the actual pattern of dispersal of household sites. One description of such a pattern showing long-term stability or change in relationship to population size and production factors would be worth a thousand emic rules. Subanum settlement pattern, a characteristic distribution of people across a portion of the earth and through a specific portion of the earth's history, is a cultural artifact. It is not necessary, indeed, it is impossible to derive this pattern solely from the emic principles, explicit or implicit, by which the Subanum think they conduct their lives.

In Northeastern Brazil, peasant fathers accept the pan-Brazilian rules emphasizing the importance of the kindred and of *compadrazco*. Family size, both in terms of the number of kinsmen per household and total effective kinship network, varies from fifteen to twenty to several hundred, according to class. Within a given village, the most economically successful peasant has the largest circle of kinsmen. Unlike his upper-class metropolitan counterparts, however, the circle of kinsmen which surrounds him is associated with the siphoning off of his wealth rather than its consolidation. It is a cultural fact that the pressure upon the Brazilian peasant to expand his family size reduces his chances for upward mobility, yet I challenge the ethnosemanticists to find a mental locus for the rule which links large families to the maintenance of poverty. This problem may be viewed on a still broader scale: Is the poverty of the world's peasant masses a cultural artifact? If so, and it is hard to imagine a negative answer, then are we to suppose that this poverty results from a set of emic rules to which the poor obstinately subscribe?

### *Ethnosemantics and Archaeology*

Finally, the relationship between ethnosemantics and the diachronic approach to sociocultural phenomena through ethnology, history, archaeology, and the comparative method deserves comment. Ethnosemantics may be able to develop valid, and within limits, useful descriptions of contemporary social systems, but the linguistic model, even more strongly than the model employed by the British structural-functionalists, is inherently incapable of making discoveries about the content of history and the nature of historical processes. If anthropology is to have a diachronic component, that component cannot consist of an inventory

of cognitive rules. The reason for this is that for most of human history we have no operational basis for getting inside of people's heads in the manner proposed by Frake. But even if we did, we would still confront an insuperable difficulty. The archaeologically recoverable portion of most of human history consists of the environmental modifications which different varieties and expressions of energy quanta have brought into being. Binary oppositions, contrastive features, skewing rules, etc., have this in common: they have no measurable energy cost.



# 8 Among the Siriono, Nomads of the Long Bow



Allan R. Holmberg

FIELDWORK REMAINS CENTRAL IN CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY. BASIC DATA come not from laboratories but from living cultures. An anthropologist goes to live in another culture. He settles down amidst unfamiliar surroundings and, if he is successful, his status slowly changes from clumsy alien to friendly stranger. Ideally, he speaks or will learn to speak the local language but inevitably he will rely on certain people more than others as teachers, interpreters, or informants. To some extent, the anthropologist lives like his hosts, as well as among them. This is quite variable, depending on the culture, the personality of the fieldworker and the situation itself. In any event, the fieldworker participates in activities as well as he is able and as far as he is permitted. He observes whatever he can of the endless series of events and the tangle of relationships which surround him. He maps, questions, records, photographs, jokes, mourns, and gets drunk at local blowouts. Sometimes he gets sick because he may be exposed to hazardous sanitary conditions. Though the following excerpt from an ethnographic monograph reveals some of the difficulties which may be encountered in fieldwork, it also indicates the thinking and preparation that precede the choice of a particular locale or culture for study.

SOURCE: *Nomads of the Long Bow* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, Institute of Social Anthropology, Publication No. 10, 1950), pp. 1-4. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

Allan R. Holmberg (1909-1966) was Professor of Anthropology at Cornell University. He did fieldwork in Bolivia and Peru and was a guiding spirit behind the important Vicos experiment in applied anthropology.

As I continued my anthropological studies, it became more and more apparent to me, as to others, that a science of culture and behavior was most apt to arise from the application of techniques, methods, and approaches of several scientific disciplines concerned with human behavior—particularly social anthropology, sociology, psychology, and psychoanalysis—to specific problems. Consequently, in casting around for a subject on which to carry out field work, I began to search for one that would be especially adaptable to cross-disciplinary treatment.

While studying at the Institute of Human Relations, I became keenly aware of the significant role played by such basic drives as hunger, thirst, pain, and sex, in forming, instilling, and changing habits. Because of the difficulty of studying human behavior under laboratory conditions, our knowledge about the processes of learning has been derived largely from experimental studies of animals. However, the procedure, successfully employed in psychological experimentation, of depriving animals of food suggested that it might be possible to gain further insight into the relationship between the principles of learning and cultural forms and processes by studying a group of perennially hungry human beings. It was logical to assume that where the conditions of a sparse and insecure food supply exist in human society the frustrations and anxieties centering around the drive of hunger should have significant repercussions on behavior and on cultural forms themselves. Hence, I took as my general problem the investigation of the relation between the economic aspect and other aspects of culture in a society functioning under conditions of a sparse and insecure food supply. More specifically, the problem resolved itself into determining, if possible, the effect of a more or less constant frustration of the hunger drive on such cultural forms as diet, food taboos, eating habits, dreams, antagonisms, magic, religion, and sex relations, and upon such cultural processes as integration, mobility, socialization, education, and change.

In our own society there are many individuals who suffer from lack of food, but one rarely finds hunger as a group phenomenon. For this reason a primitive society, the Siriono of eastern Bolivia, was chosen for study. The Siriono were selected for several reasons. In the first place, they were reported to be seminomadic and to suffer from lack of food. In the second place, they were known to be a functioning society. In the third place, the conditions for study among them seemed favorable, since it was possible to make contact with the primitive bands roaming in the forest through an Indian school which had been established by the Bolivian Government in 1937 for those Siriono who had come out of the forest and abandoned aboriginal life.

I left for Bolivia on September 28, 1940, and arrived in the field on November 28, 1940. Between November 28, 1940, and May 17, 1941, I worked with informants of various bands of Siriono who had been

gathered together in a Bolivian Government Indian school at Casarabe, a kind of mixed village of Indians and Bolivians, situated about 40 miles east of Trinidad, capital of the Department of the Beni. At the time of my stay this so-called school had a population of about 325 Indians.

Following my residence in Casarabe, where I became grounded in the Indian language and those aspects of the aboriginal culture that still persisted there, I left in May 1941, to join a band of about 60 Siriono who were living under somewhat more primitive conditions near the Rio Blanco on a *cocáo* plantation, called Chiquiguani, which was at that time a kind of branch of the above-mentioned school. Upon arriving at Chiquiguani, however, I found that as a result of altercations with the Bolivians, the Indians had dispersed into the forest, and so I encountered no people with whom to work. Consequently, I returned to a ranch near the village of El Carmen. There I was fortunate in meeting an American cattle rancher, Frederick Park Richards, since deceased, who had resided in this area for many years and who had a number of Siriono living on his farm and cattle ranch. Through him I was presented to a Bolivian, Luis Silva Sánchez, a first-rate bushman and explorer for the aforementioned school, who offered to be my companion and who stayed with me during most of the time that I lived and wandered with the Siriono. In company with Silva I set out in search of the Indians who had dispersed into the forest. After about 10 days they were located, and they agreed to settle on the banks of the Rio Blanco, about 2 or 3 days' journey up the river by canoe from the village of El Carmen, at a place which we founded and named Tibaera, the Indian word for *assái* palm, the site being so designated because of the abundance of this tree found there. I spent from July 15 to August 28, 1941, at Tibaera, continuing my general cultural and linguistic studies, but under what I regarded as unsatisfactory conditions, since I had previously laid my plans and devoted my energies to acquiring techniques for observing a group of Siriono who had had little or no previous contact. Consequently, I suggested to Silva that we go in search of other Indians. Finally, on August 28, 1941, I set out from Tibaera, in company with Silva and parts of two extended families of Indians (21 people in all), traveling east and south through the raw bush in the general direction of the Franciscan Missions of Guarayos, where we were told by the Indians that we might locate another band who had had little or no previous contact. After 8 days of rough travel, much of which involved passing through swamps and through an area which had long been abandoned by the Siriono, we joyously arrived at a section of high ground containing relatively recent remains of a Siriono camp site. My Indian companions told me that this site had been occupied by a small number of Indians who had come there in quest of calabashes about three "moons" earlier.

Inspired by the hope of soon locating a primitive band, we silenced our guns and lived by hunting with the bow and arrow so as not to frighten any Indians that might be within earshot of a gun. We followed the rude trails which had been made by the Indians about 3 months earlier, and after passing many abandoned huts, each one newer than the last, we finally arrived at midday on the eleventh day of march just outside of a village. On the advice of our Indian companions, Silva and I removed most of our clothes, so as not to be too conspicuous in the otherwise naked party—I at least had quite a tan—and leaving behind our guns and all supplies except a couple of baskets of roast peccary meat, which we were saving as a peace gesture, we sandwiched ourselves in between our Indian guides and made a hasty entrance into the communal hut. The occupants, who were enjoying a midday siesta, were so taken by surprise that we were able to start talking to them in their own language before they could grasp their weapons or flee. Moreover, as their interest almost immediately settled on the baskets of peccary meat, we felt secure within a few moments' time and sent back for the rest of our supplies.

Once having established contact with such a group, I had intended to settle down or wander with them for several months, or until I could complete my studies. I was forced, however, to abandon this plan when, after being with them for a day or two, I came down with an infection in my eyes of such gravity that I was almost blinded. Fearing that this infection would spread to a point that might cause the loss of my sight, and since I carried no medicines with which to heal it, I decided to set out for the Franciscan Missions of the Guarayos, about 8 days' distance on foot, the nearest point at which aid could be obtained. Before leaving, however, I consulted with the chief of this new group (his name was Aćíba-eóko or Long-arm) and told him that I planned to return and study the manner of life of his people. In the meantime, the Indians in our original party, knowing of my plan, had already convinced the chief and other members of his band to return with them to the Rio Blanco and settle down for a while at Tibaera, a plan which suited me perfectly. Consequently, in the company of four Indians of this new band and Silva, I traveled on foot to Yaguarú, Guarayos. After about 2 weeks of fine treatment at the hands of the civilian administrator, Don Francisco Materna, and the equally hospitable Franciscan fathers and nuns, I was able to rejoin the band, and we slowly returned to Tibaera, arriving there on October 11, 1941.

Besides what studies I was able to make of this band while roaming with them during part of September and October, 1941, I continued to live with them at Tibaera, except for occasional periods of 10 days' or 2 weeks' absence for purposes of curing myself of one tropical malady

or another or of refreshing my mental state, until March 1942, when my studies were terminated by news that the United States had become involved in war 3 months previously.

As can be readily inferred from the account given above of my contacts with the Siriono, they were studied under three different conditions: first, for about 4 months, while they were living at Casarabe under conditions of acculturation and forced labor; second, for about 2 months, while they were wandering under aboriginal conditions in the forest; finally, for about 6 months, while they were living at Tibaera, where aboriginal conditions had not appreciably changed except for the introduction of more agriculture and some iron tools. During the course of my work, I made a complete ethnological survey of the culture, only part of which can be published here, although my attention was focused primarily on the problem of the sparse and insecure food supply and its relation to the culture. As my knowledge of the language and culture increased, I was constantly formulating, testing, and reformulating hypotheses with respect to this problem.

Since Siriono society is a functioning one, three fundamental methods of gathering field data were employed: (1) the use of informants, (2) the recording of observations, and (3) the conducting of experiments. The first two methods were followed throughout the course of the work. Experiments, such as the introduction of food plants and animals, were performed during the latter part of the study, although the extensive use of this method was limited by the termination of the research.

The application of the above field methods was facilitated by the use of various techniques of which the following were the principal ones: (1) the use of the language of the people studied and (2) the participation of the ethnographer in the cultural life of the tribe.

When possible, data were recorded on the spot in an ethnographic journal, which was supplemented by a record of personal experiences while in the field. As the group was small, everyone was used as an informant, and since most of the activities of the Siriono center in but one hut, data on the behavior patterns of almost everyone could be recorded. No paid informants were used, although gifts such as bush knives and beads were given. No Siriono was a willing informant; little information was volunteered, and some was consciously withheld. Had it not been for the fact that I possessed a shotgun and medicines, life with the Indians would have been impossible. By contributing to the food supply and curing the sick, I became enough of an asset to them to be tolerated for the period of my residence.

At the time of leaving the field (I had not finished my studies) I did not feel satisfied that I had gained a profound insight into Siriono culture. True, I had studied the language to the extent that I could carry on a

fairly lively conversation with the Indians, but the time spent in satisfying my own basic needs—acquiring enough food to eat, avoiding the omnipresent insect pests, trying to keep a fresh shift of clothes, reducing those mental anxieties that accompany solitude in a hostile world, and obtaining sufficient rest in a fatiguing climate where one is active most of the day—often physically prevented me from keeping as full a record of native life as I might have kept had I been observing more sedentary informants under less trying conditions. However, if I have contributed something to an understanding of these elusive but rapidly disappearing Indians, I shall feel more than satisfied.



## 9 Studying and Restudying Tikopia

Raymond Firth

SOME OF THE MOST PROFOUND CHANGES THAT HAVE OCCURRED IN CULTURAL anthropology apply to fieldwork. This involves not only the theories and assumptions that underlie the research (see II:5, 6, 7, and 48), but even the choice of field site. Anthropologists are now likely to be found working anywhere—in New York or New Delhi, London or Lourenço Marques, as well as in New Guinea or Noumea. Indeed, anthropologists now are likely to be Chinese or Thai, Ibo or Zulu, and this has had salutary consequences in a discipline which includes cross-cultural understanding among its paramount aims.

The fact that one can get almost anywhere in twenty-four hours and absolutely anywhere in less than a week (if given a passport and visas) has had its effects. Anthropologists, for example, hardly ever

SOURCES: *We, the Tikopia* (London, George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1936), pp. 1–11, 15. *Social Change in Tikopia* (London, George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1959), pp. 23–28. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

Raymond William Firth (b. 1901) is Professor of Anthropology at the London School of Economics. He is a former President of the Royal Anthropological Institute. After his original work on the Maori of his native New Zealand, and his work on the Polynesian inhabitants of Tikopia, he also did fieldwork in west Africa, Malaya and New Guinea, as well as in London. His studies of Tikopia will be an enduring and major contribution to the literature of anthropology; the most recent addition to his writings on this subject is *Tikopia Ritual and Belief* (1967). Professor Firth is also an outstanding contributor to anthropological theory. Among his recent publications in this area: *Capital, Saving and Credit in Peasant Societies* (ed., with B. S. Yamey, 1964), and *Essays on Social Organization and Values* (1964).

*describe themselves these days as going on expeditions; the expedition is left for the non-scientific traveler or the moviemaker. The communications revolution has had other consequences. It is now quite likely that the subjects of anthropological inquiry will photograph the anthropologist, or record his voice, or give him a bibliography of relevant books and articles. Even more seriously, they will probably query him about his politics and dig more deeply than ever into the motives and objectives of his research.*

*Another healthy change can be seen in the increasing frequency with which places previously studied are being studied again to gain better insight into the processes and problems of culture change. In this selection, which is pieced together from two of his works, Raymond Firth, one of the most talented and scrupulous field researchers in the history of anthropology, describes his original visit to Tikopia, western Polynesia, in the late 1920's and then about a quarter of a century later. Note his increased concern with the anthropologist's ethical problems, a topic which recurs later in these Readings (II:50).*

### I. 1928/9

In the cool of the early morning, just before sunrise, the bow of the *Southern Cross* headed towards the eastern horizon, on which a tiny dark blue outline was faintly visible. Slowly it grew into a rugged mountain mass, standing up sheer from the ocean; then as we approached within a few miles it revealed around its base a narrow ring of low, flat land, thick with vegetation. The sullen grey day with its lowering clouds strengthened my grim impression of a solitary peak, wild and stormy, upthrust in a waste of waters.

In an hour or so we were close inshore, and could see canoes coming round from the south, outside the reef, on which the tide was low. The outrigger-fitted craft drew near, the men in them bare to the waist, girdled with bark-cloth, large fans stuck in the backs of their belts, tortoise-shell rings or rolls of leaf in the ear-lobes and nose, bearded, and with long hair flowing loosely over their shoulders. Some plied the rough heavy paddles, some had finely plaited pandanus leaf-mats resting on the thwarts beside them, some had large clubs or spears in their hands. The ship anchored on a short cable in the open bay off the coral reef. Almost before the chain was down the natives began to scramble aboard, coming over the side by any means that offered, shouting fiercely to each other and to us in a tongue of which not a word was understood by the Mota-speaking folk of the mission vessel. I wondered how such turbulent human material could ever be induced to submit to scientific study.



Vahihaloa, my "boy," looked over the side from the upper deck. "My word, me fright too much," he said with a quavering laugh; "me tink this fella man him he savvy kaikai me." *Kaikai* is the pidgin-English term for "eat." For the first time, perhaps, he began to doubt the wisdom of having left what was to him the civilization of Tulagi, the seat of Government four hundred miles away, in order to stay with me for a year in this far-off spot among such wild-looking savages. Feeling none too certain myself of the reception that awaited us—though I knew that it would stop short of cannibalism—I reassured him, and we began to get out the stores. Later we went ashore in one of the canoes. As we came to the edge of the reef our craft halted on account of the falling tide. We slipped overboard on to the coral rock and began to wade ashore hand in hand with our hosts, like children at a party, exchanging smiles in lieu of anything more intelligible or tangible at the moment. We were surrounded by crowds of naked chattering youngsters, with their pleasant light-brown velvet skins and straight hair, so different from the Melanesians we had left behind. They darted about splashing like a shoal of fish, some of them falling bodily into pools in their enthusiasm. At last the long wade ended, we climbed up the steeply shelving beach, crossed the soft, dry sand strewn with the brown needles of the *Casuarina* trees—a home-like touch; it was like a pine avenue—and were led to an old chief, clad with great dignity in a white coat and a loin-cloth, who awaited us on his stool under a large shady tree.

Even with the pages of my diary before me it is difficult to reconstruct the impressions of that first day ashore—to depersonalize the people I later came to know so well and view them as merely a part of the tawny surging crowd; to put back again into that unreal perspective events which afterwards took on such different values. In his early experiences in the field the anthropologist is constantly grappling with the intangible. The reality of the native life is going on all around him, but he himself is not yet in focus to see it. He knows that most of what he records at first will be useless: it will be either definitely incorrect, or so inadequate that it must later be discarded. Yet he must make a beginning somewhere. He realizes that at this stage he is incapable of separating the pattern of custom from the accidentals of individual behaviour, he wonders if each slight gesture does not hold some meaning which is hidden from him, he aches to be able to catch and retain some of the flood of talk he hears on all sides, and he is consumed with envy of the children who are able to toss about so lightly that speech which he must so painfully acquire. He is conscious of good material running to waste before him moment by moment; he is impressed by the vastness of the task that lies before him and of his own feeble equipment for it; in the face of a language and custom to which he has not the key, he feels that he is acting like a moron before the natives. At the same time he is

experiencing the delights of discovery, he is gaining an inkling of what is in store; like a gourmet walking round a feast that is spread, he savours in anticipation the quality of what he will later appreciate in full.

### *The Background to Anthropological Work*

It is a matter of common agreement among modern anthropological field-workers that an account of the institutions of a native people should contain some description of the methods by which the information was obtained. This is in accordance with the recognized logical position that even the simplest record of what purports to be the "facts" of a native culture has involved a considerable amount of interpretation, and every generalization about what the people do has meant a selection from the immeasurably wide field of their activity, a comparison of items of individual behaviour. The conditions of the selection—that is, the situation of the observer in regard to the material—should therefore be indicated. In terms of anthropology, it is desirable to make clear such points as: the relation of the investigator to other folk of his own culture, whether isolated from them or in daily contact; the linguistic medium of communication with the natives, whether the vernacular, a "pidgin" or other *lingua franca*, or translation by interpreters; the economic and social medium—payment, in money or kind, services rendered, goodwill, or simple gossip and conversational exchange; the nature of the record, whether accounts of eye-witnesses, or hearsay evidence, or personal observation of the investigator himself; whether what is described is current practice or is now obsolete; and the range of instances relied upon for generalization. Elaborate documentation of every single statement is impossible in the space available, but some general reference is necessary. In the following pages details of this kind are given. They are not in tabular form but are set out as a running account, which is less of a tax on the reader's patience and allows of a realization of the flavour of scientific work in a remote community.

Rarely visited by Europeans and with no white residents, Tikopia lies in the extreme east of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate, and is inhabited by twelve hundred healthy and vigorous natives. Homogeneous in speech and culture, they are a unit of what may be termed the "Polynesian fringe" in Melanesia, their closest affinities being not with the people of the Solomons region but with those of Samoa, Tonga and even more distant groups to the east.

Almost untouched by the outside world, the people of Tikopia manage their own affairs, are governed by their chiefs, and are proud of themselves and their culture. They are primitive in the sense that the level of their material technical achievement is not high and they have been affected in only a few externals by Western civilization; at the same

time they have an elaborate code of etiquette, a clear-cut systematic social organization, and they have developed very strongly the ceremonial side of their life. They still wear only their simple bark-cloth, they live in plain sago-leaf thatch huts, they carry out the traditional forms of mourning, marriage and initiation. *Mirabile dictu*, a large section of them still worship their ancient gods with full panoply of ritual, a condition almost unique in the Polynesia of to-day.

A brief reference to the religious condition of the people is necessary in order to give some idea of the setting in which my work was carried out.

A section of the Tikopia are ostensibly Christian, the mission vessel calls on the average once a year, and there is a native teacher from the Melanesian community of Motlav in the Banks group living on the island. He, however, is married to a Tikopia woman, and conforms in most respects to the customs of what has been for twenty years his home. He uses the Tikopia language alone, except in church services, he moves freely among the people, his children go through the normal ceremonies of youth, and he makes the appropriate exchanges at funerals and other social occasions. He has no ground of his own but works his wife's land in native style, and when a canoe is manned takes his place among the crew in the ordinary way. In so far as he conforms to native custom his position is that of a man of influence in Tikopia society. On the other hand he regulates church affairs with several Tikopia teachers under him, is strict regarding the observance of the *aso tapu*, the Sabbath, and endeavours to maintain morality by deprecating free sexual association of young people (an old Tikopia institution) urging marriage on those who sin, and debarring from church young men who attend the heathen festivals. He takes advantage of his position, too, to rally even the heathen among his wife's kin to assist him in large-scale gardening, initiation and other important affairs. A man of strong personality, he pursues the aims of the Church and his own advancement as parallel activities, and with equal zeal; he is calculating but generous; and he interprets the Christian teaching with force, in an essentially native manner.

The baptized Tikopia comprise about half the population, and though of the four churches two are on the eastern side of the island the majority of the Christians live in the district of Faea, on the western or lee side. Here is the only convenient anchorage for vessels. This has been one of the predisposing factors in the conversion of the local people. The traditional rivalry between the districts, the character of the chief of the dominant clan of Faea—a strong-willed old man with a distinct eye to the main chance—and the system of payment to mission teachers in European goods, which are greatly coveted by the natives, are other elements in the situation. The equivalent of even £1 or

£1, 10s. per annum in calico, fish-hooks, knives and other articles—the salary of a Tikopia teacher—is a prodigious amount of wealth to a native family; the equivalent of the £7, 10s. which is given to the Motlav man each year contributes in a very large measure to his power and prestige. It has not been entirely accident that two of the teachers are sons of the old chief, and another is his brother's son, while the Motlav man is settled in the chief's village.

In many respects the Christianity of the Tikopia is only superficial. That the old gods still exist is never questioned by the chief or his people; they are merely latent, and from time to time make their presence felt with startling effect. The old chief has abandoned the essence of his kava ritual—the pouring of libations to ancestors and gods with invocations for fruitfulness and health to the land. But he retains an emasculated version of it by throwing food offerings daily to his ancestors before meals. He also conducts the making of turmeric with most of the ancient ritual, especially in observance of taboos. When he fell ill during my stay, as the result of his dramatic attempt to coerce his old gods, it was by the intervention of a heathen chief with these dieties that he was cured.

The heathen constitute the district of Raveja, and a number among them three chiefs, including the principal of all, the Ariki Kafika. This man and his eldest son, Pa Fenuatara, were two of my most regular and valuable informants. Among others were the Christian chief, the Ariki Tafua, and his eldest son, Pa Rajifuri, the Ariki Taumako, Pae Sao, Pa Teva, Seremata, Kavakiu, Pa Motuata, Pa Rajimaseke, Pa Tekaumata, Pa Taraoro and Afirua. They were drawn without distinction from heathen and Christian, from all districts and clans, from married and unmarried.

As I moved about freely among the people of the whole island, however, most of my data were gathered not from selected individuals in set interviews but in the course of the ordinary affairs of their daily life. In particular I gained a great deal while reclining for hours at a time in the native houses during the intervals of ceremonies, or when food was cooking, when conversation flowed easily and without haste.

I spent just twelve months on Tikopia, from July 1928 to July 1929, and in that time received one visit from the mission vessel—an extra call by courtesy—in October 1928, bringing a second supply of stores and trade goods. For the ensuing nine months I saw no white man. The outer world seemed dim and far away, the only events of interest were those happening in Tikopia, and when the *Southern Cross* finally arrived I can honestly say that the colour of white faces seemed less pleasant than that of brown, and that my chief desire was for the letters of friends rather than for the company of Europeans as such. And this in no way is to impugn the hospitality of the Melanesian Mission and the officers

of the *Southern Cross*, from whom I received kindness much more than ordinary courtesy demanded, most generously given.

During practically all my stay I used only the native language, my initial medium of conversation—a mixture of Maori and pidgin-English—being abandoned entirely after the first three weeks. At no time did I have a regular interpreter. Naturally, I recorded as much material in the Tikopia tongue as possible. But apart from taking down the statements of informants in the ordinary way, I made a practice of jotting down verbatim on the spot scraps of what I overheard, conversations between people, comments on behaviour, observations made during the progress of work, and the like. These often give a more intimate insight into the human relationships involved than a long dictated text on the same theme, and I regard this type of material as among the most valuable of my records. The comparatively simple orthography needed for the language, and a fortunate rapidity of handwriting, enabled me to get down all such material immediately.

Of money I had no need, for the Tikopia do not understand its use. They know of the existence of this thing called *mane*, and that by its aid one may walk into a *fare koroa*, a house where goods are stored, and secure what one desires. From visiting vessels they have even received stray coins, but of their relative values they know nothing. Pa Fenuatara brought me a florin one day and said: "Friend, is this a pound?" "No," I said.

"What is its value?"

"It is worth a knife, not a knife of the size for clearing the cultivations, but a knife so long—" (indicating a 10-inch blade).

"A, so that is it." And after deliberation he gave it to me as a keepsake, since, though he himself had no use for it, it was obviously a thing of value.

Another brought me a halfpenny, and said, "Friend, this is money?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

I replied that it was worth five small fish-hooks for *api* and *nefunefu*, or two of the *tau kurakura* size—the only method of indicating its worth.

Others being given pence by sailors on board a warship in payment for coconuts and bananas threw them overboard on their way back to shore, exclaiming: "Useless bits of iron!"

All my transactions took place through the medium of trade goods. Thus for the building of my house I paid Fakasiŋetevasa and his assistants the sum of one axe, two plane irons, five knives, six pipes, five sticks of tobacco and fifty fish-hooks, with *douceur* of rice, meat and tobacco to other people who helped to make the thatch. For the purchase and repair of my small canoe I handed over goods of about the same

kind and amount, though they were received with rather bad grace, as an adze was desired instead.

This absence of money in Tikopia has a bearing on several situations. It is an index of the barrier that lies at present between the Tikopia and the economic forces which are at their door; it was one of the conditioning factors in my relationship to my informants, since any equivalent which I gave them had to be in objects desired for their own sake, not as tokens of value; it offers a point of comparison with the culture of other Polynesian peoples, practically all of whom now know and use money even among themselves.

At first I had the greatest difficulty in resisting the acceptance of presents, mainly of pandanus mats in exchange for my goods; later these were implemented by invitations to meals, which it would have been discourteous to decline. Gradually, however, I made my would-be hosts understand that my goods were intended primarily not for purchase of specimens, but as gifts to those who assisted me in recording language and customs. And, in conformity with the native attitude, for the chiefs were reserved the choicest items, of which they early received a selection as an earnest. My system was to make good gifts to those who contributed valuable material and let this principle be known. In my experience the old anthropologist's maxim never to pay for information is not applicable in a community where individual or family privileges are jealously conserved. The only feasible method is to pay, but with discretion, and to rely on one's system of checks to ensure accuracy. As every field-worker who knows a native community well will probably agree, one can always find other people with some knowledge of the matter desired from the expert, and by cautious probing, by challenging his accuracy, by suggestion of his ignorance or of matters withheld by him, or by studied reticence oneself and implication of one's own foreknowledge, one may check very accurately the information given by the real authority. I myself knew for four months the secret name of the principal god of the Ariki Kafika and much subsidiary data before, his confidence won in the meanwhile, he whispered it to me himself, and unconsciously thus proved his own veracity. He never knew that I had forestalled him in this, though he suspected that some lesser "official secrets" were being disclosed by others of his clan. In such a closely knit community as that of Tikopia, where every chief and elder has links with the ritual of the others, it is comparatively simple, once one has made the first steps, to exercise fairly complete control even of esoteric material.

To make the first breach in the barrier, however, is no easy matter. When I arrived in the island my motives were of course suspect, and though outwardly very friendly and hospitable the people were really greatly disturbed. As I learnt much later, the chiefs gave orders that I

was to be told nothing about their gods and ritual practices, and, such is still the solidarity against the stranger, Christian and heathen alike down to the smallest child continued to obey, and to preserve silence on such matters. Shortly after I settled in Matautu I had occasion to ask the sons of the Ariki Tafua, among whom were two Christian teachers, for the beginnings of the genealogy of their family. As one man they assured me with every appearance of sincerity that they did not remember the names of their ancestors, that even the old people did not know who their forefathers were. Surprised at finding such ignorance among a Polynesian folk, usually so proud of their descent, I let the matter pass for the time being. Months later of course they acknowledged their own deceit with a laugh, but when one realizes how in their belief the invocation of the names of their ancestors lies at the core of their safety and prosperity, one can well understand the attempt to mislead the stranger in the interests of the community. Gradually, however, I began to get an inkling of the facts. A fishing formula appealing to ancestors, the existence of the term *atua* (spirit), a disclosure by an informant who went further than he intended, a comparison with Maori custom, and the like all served to prise open the door. Even then, however, the majority remained aloof in such matters, and intensely suspicious of any people with whom I had private sessions. Even the man on whose ground I had built my house had incurred the anger of his fellow-villagers, and had been cursed by them for his acquiescence. In an atmosphere of distrust, spying, and reticence in all but overt social affairs I lived for some months, every step to establish a foothold being a struggle. Later I found that during the first few weeks of my stay a whole cycle of ceremonies of the "Work of the Gods" had taken place day after day in Raveja, and not a soul, not even the Motlav teacher, had told me a word about it. Men, women, and even children preserved absolute reticence. A canoe ceremony of the Ariki Taumako I indeed attended as a guest, by invitation, and also went through the ritual of the five days of the turmeric making of the Ariki Tafua, keeping its taboos, but in neither case was I allowed to realize that what I saw was merely a part of a long intricate scheme of systematic activities which marked the turn of the year. Towards the end of 1928, however, I had learned the significance of this cycle, and managed to make up the deficiency by attending the ritual of the following two seasons at the express invitation of the chiefs. And before this, mainly through the agency of one man of rank, a perversely honest, rough-tongued elder, who after declaring on the beach on the day of my arrival his intention of boycotting me, later received me hospitably, performed for me his kava, and constituted himself one of my most trustworthy advisers and informants, I had obtained some insight into the real meaning of Tikopia ritual. Later again as I attended their ceremonies, behaved circumspectly, ate their food, conformed to the tapu,

took part in the system of exchanges and, above all, spoke in approval of what I saw, chiefs and elders opened their stores of knowledge. Most of all, as an inmate of the houses of Kafika and Tafua, spending long days under their roofs, I began to feel the pulse of the real native life.

This was not without its reaction. When I fell ill after the ritual cycle of the monsoon season, gossip had it that the chiefs, fearful of my use of what they had disclosed, had sought my death through supernatural means. As I recovered it was said that, fearing vengeance from the white men if I died on Tikopia, they had changed their plan, and intended that I should go and die in my own land. Other responsibilities came too. The Ariki Kafika himself said to me: "Friend, I have told you the secrets of my kava; my *ora* (life) and that of my people and this land Tikopia will go with you. I shall sit here and watch; if evil comes to this land then I shall know that it is through your doing."

More than any other scientist the anthropologist is dependent on the confidence of his human material, and must be always faced by the quandary of how far he is betraying this trust by the publication of what he has learned. To withhold some sections of his data means distorting the picture he is trying to give.

Here I would like to express a personal feeling. What I have set down in this book, and what will appear in subsequent publications I have tried to make an exact and scientific record, keeping back nothing that I learned, and documenting opinions in order that as accurate an estimate as possible may be formed of the institutions and ways of life of these people. Much that was told me, especially in matters of religion, was given in confidence on the understanding that it would be made known only to *tanata poto*, to adepts, to persons of wisdom. I publish it in the belief that this is being done. Should there be among the readers of this book any who may visit Tikopia, in a professional capacity or otherwise, I trust that the knowledge they may gain from it may give them an understanding and a respect for the native custom and belief, and that nothing which they find herein will be used to the discomfiture of the people or as a lever to disturb their mode of life, whatever be the motive. If this is observed I will have made no breach of faith.

As personal servant I took with me Vahihaloa, a lad of Ontong Java;<sup>1</sup> to secure a Tikopia who knew white men's ways was impossible. I had wished therefore for a boy who was trained, but a Polynesian, because of his ability to fit into the speech and culture of the Tikopia. Vahihaloa—Vasieloa, as they called him—was admirable in this role. With a native shrewdness was combined a quick wit and a capacity for making friends, and his flair for organizing the youth of the village to

<sup>1</sup> He was transferred to my service for the time being through the kindness of Mr. J. C. Barley, now His Honour the Resident Commissioner of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands.



assist him in domestic duties and for attending to the proper distribution of the volume of food which flowed into our household was extremely useful to an anthropologist. His love story, a curious mixture of calculation and desire, of magic secretly practised and attraction openly disavowed, was an interesting and rather touching lesson to me in native mentality. I have since learned that tuberculosis has claimed him.

Vahihaloa soon recovered from his tremors on the day of our landing. After a month or so he began to consort with the young people, he became enamoured of the native dance, let his hair grow long and bleached it in Tikopia style.

For about a month we lived in the *fare sul*, the mission school hut kindly placed at my disposal by Bishop Steward. Then we moved to a house built for me near-by, and named Otara, after my New Zealand home. Midway through my stay I went over to Raveja to live, partly to become more closely acquainted with other sections of the people and partly to be near the scene of the season's religious ceremonies. There I occupied Tuarani, an old house lent by the Resiake family, with father and grandfather of the owners lying buried beneath the floor, as is the common Tikopia practice. In both Faea and Raveja I lived in the villages, with neighbours within a few yards, so that I was able to observe a great deal of their domestic affairs with ease.

I give this somewhat egoistic recital not because I think that anthropology should be made light reading—though with a little more clarity of thought much of it might be made lighter than it is—but because some account of the relations of the anthropologist to his people is relevant to the nature of his results. It is an index to their social digestion—some folk cannot stomach an outsider, others absorb him easily. The student of human societies is in a different position from most scientists; the active reactions of his material to him, the character of the association between them, determines to an important degree the quality of his data. The social or institutional digestion of the Tikopia, once induced to begin, is of a vigorous character. Conformity to their customs they take not so much as a compliment as a natural adaptation; in a specific ceremony they can conceive only of participants, not of observers. At such a time one cannot be outside the group, one must be of it. There are limits, of course. One has a notebook, for writing is one's habit; one does not wail at funerals, for it is recognized that Europeans are dry fountains; but one must be of this party or that, one must keep the prescribed taboos of sitting or eating, one must make and receive the normal economic contributions.

At the same time the fact that one wears different clothing, usually sleeps in one's own house and normally takes at least the evening meal there, and acts in so many things as an independent unit, not as

as member of a group, always prevents complete absorption into one's native surroundings.

Like most anthropologists I regard with scepticism the claim of any European writer that he has "been accepted by the natives as one of themselves." Leaving out of account the question of self-inflation, such a claim is usually founded upon a misapprehension of native politeness or of a momentary emotional verbal identification with themselves of a person who shares their sympathies. I myself have been assured a number of times that I was "just like a Tikopia" because I conformed in some particulars to the economic and social habits of their people, as in dancing with them and observing the etiquette of (pseudo-) kinship, or because I espoused their point of view on some problem of contact with civilization. But this I regarded as a compliment of much the same order as a reference to "our" canoe or "our" orchard ("yours and mine") by one of my courtesy brothers, which did mean certain concrete privileges, but not a share in real ownership. This problem of identification with the native culture is not merely an academic one. Europeans who allege that they "have become a member of the tribe," or "are regarded by the natives as one of themselves," are prone to lay claim to knowing what the native thinks, to being qualified to represent the native point of view. On a particular issue this may be in substance true, but too often dogmatic statements about ideas are substituted for detailed evidence of observed behaviour.

## II. 1952/3

On my first visit to Tikopia I worked alone. Considering the little that was then known of the society, the suspicion of the Tikopia towards an outsider, their reputation for wildness, and the need for personal responsibility in establishing confidence, this seemed sound procedure. On my second visit I took a research assistant, James Spillius, a Canadian anthropologist who had already some preliminary field experience on the north-west coast of the United States. Since the structure of Tikopia society was now known, as well as a great deal about the Tikopia language and custom, distinct advantage could be gained by joint work. We were able to cover a greater range; and to exchange data and interpretations as the research proceeded. In particular too, since I could only remain for about five months on the island, I had wished to have the help of a colleague in obtaining a record of events on Tikopia over at least a complete year. This was accomplished by Spillius, who remained on the island for nearly seventeen months in all, in very difficult conditions.

In any discussion of the validity of our findings in Tikopia in 1952/3, the question must be raised as to how far Spillius and I were making comparable observations. From this point of view, we took some

elementary methodological precautions. At an early stage we made brief reliability assessment checks on each other's recording. We recorded the same ceremony independently, and checked for each other's omissions or variations of record. We found that these differences were slight, mostly to be explained by differences in our seating position. We also made a test of comparability of interpretation by giving independent accounts of the position of executives (*maru*) *vis-à-vis* their chiefs. Here the differences were wider, but neither then nor subsequently did they seem to be of major account. We also, of course, continually discussed together our field records and interpretations. The immediate point of such checking was, as far as I was concerned, to ensure that as far as possible our empirical records could be equated and that, in particular, those of Spillius in the period after my departure could be properly compared closely with my own of 1952 and of 1929. I may not always agree with Spillius's interpretations, in matters of emphasis and attribution of motive. But after working together in the field for five months, and on the material in London for a year, I have been eminently satisfied as to the comparability of the empirical records made. Where, however, any specific issue is at all critical, I have indicated when material is drawn from Spillius's account. On the other hand, I have his authority to state that, for him, my 1929 picture of Tikopia society has seemed valid both in general and in detail, and that any differences of interpretation he found could be attributed primarily to post-1929 development.

Spillius and I used the ordinary intensive techniques of research common to British social anthropology. As regards language, I myself used the vernacular from the time of my arrival in Tikopia. I had remembered much of this through working over my Tikopia texts for many years. In talks with Tikopia in Honiara and on the voyage down I found that my command of the language was at first halting. But it turned out that over the years my grammatical control had actually improved so that in a few weeks I found that I tended to be more fluent than on my first visit. Spillius for some time used pidgin-English interspersed with a growing Tikopia vocabulary. But in the later months of his stay practically all his discussions were in the Tikopia language.

As in 1929, a great deal of information was obtained by interview with informants, either in their own houses or in ours. These were for the most part private conversations and frequently lasted an entire afternoon or evening. They were relatively unstructured interviews. While directed for the most part by us along channels to provide information on selected topics, apart from our census enquiries they were not concerned with any formal questionnaire and allowed free presentation of other topics. Some interviews were conducted in semi-secrecy, barring the door to outsiders. This was on Tikopia initiative, as, for example, by a spirit medium who knew he was being criticized by the

officials of the Church, or by a man of rank wishing to discuss problems of public order with frankness. Observation of Tikopia behaviour in as many different contexts as possible was, of course, the necessary supplement to talking with informants. We both used freely the method of participant observation which, as I have described earlier, is regarded as natural by the Tikopia. From fishing drives to funerals, from canoe chases of would-be suicides to Work of the Gods, Spillius and I together or separately, took part in many Tikopia affairs. We also at times entered into situations in which from our point of view we were almost *dramatis personae*, being assigned specific roles to play in the ritual system. The ideology was one in which we did not believe. But for the Tikopia no question of belief was involved; they simply assumed our concurrence. Spillius bore offerings to a funeral; he also poured kava libations, carried ritual instruments; and anointed a sacred canoe in the Work of the Gods. I had a long series of discussions with spirit mediums in the trance state, made spirit offerings, and was myself involved in a system of family relationships on the "spirit" plane. Here we were more than usual self-conscious actors on the social stage.

The qualitative information we obtained dealt with the main features of the social, political and economic system, with the prime objective of providing comparison with 1928/9. A special study was made of the religious system, in particular of the "Work of the Gods." In 1928/9 I had made a very detailed investigation of this elaborate religious cycle. In 1952 I made a parallel study, strictly comparing the rituals item by item to see how far they were repeated precisely or what variation had occurred in them. This study was continued with great fidelity by Spillius after I left. Our joint observations provided the basis for a close estimate of change in the internal religious field.

An important section of our work was quantitative in character. One of my main instruments of research in 1929 was a sociological census; this was repeated in 1952 with a similar schedule. Spillius and I jointly also made a record of land use and ownership in the area of Rakisu, superimposing it in effect on the sketch map and records of that area made by me in 1929. Other comparative quantitative records included a village plan, a plan of fish weirs, and a property census—all by Spillius. I also made a canoe census more complete than in 1929 with help from Spillius. By such repetition of observation it was possible to get some quantitative estimate of change in significant social relationships over the generation. We recognized the general precautions in the use of quantification: that there was no point in accumulating figures for their own sake, in aiming at a false precision; that data had to be collected in view of their relevance to a definite problem; and that in the last resort it was not possible to define all trends in numerical terms. But we also saw that at a relatively gross level of interpretation of social

material, comparison of quantified data could be very significant in correcting the errors of impressionism. Moreover, we hoped that by such aid it might be possible to present some indices of social change which could be used for comparative purposes. I relate this quantitative material to its appropriate context of problem later, and think that this type of study is of more general methodological interest.

In writing this book I have paid especial attention to the general principles of the responsibility of a field anthropologist for his material. It has become clear to me as the years have gone on that an anthropologist should be prepared to treat his field notebooks and diary as an historical source. He should use as factual data only what can be substantiated by reference to these contemporary records, with the minimum of memory links. He may well cite remembered impressions—provided they are so described. But memory is a treacherous guide and in the reworking of data it is easy to mistake the sequence of events, alter their emphasis and misrepresent the facts of an observed situation unless one can go back for check to an original record made at the time. As scientific social anthropology develops, interest in the validity of empirical generalization is likely to grow. With the long period of time which often elapses between making a field record and final analysis of the results, it is all the more necessary that the analysis should be capable of being related point by point to the record made at the time of observation.

### *Role of the Investigators*

Participation in Tikopia social and ritual affairs depended upon and was an index of our rapport with the people. This rapport was obtained much more swiftly than in 1928. Then, when I arrived the Tikopia were outwardly friendly and hospitable, but in reality they were greatly disturbed over the presence of a European on the island. I was fortunate in that the barriers of mistrust were breached and that memories of the first visit had remained lively and agreeable. Small details of my earlier visit had been vividly remembered. In 1952 stories were told in my presence of where I had sat in 1928/9, of what I had eaten and what I had said on occasions a generation before. In particular, gifts which I had made to people were remembered with warmth and some had even survived. A piece of calico given as a temple vestment had been carefully preserved and an adze presented to one of the chiefs had been consecrated and made into a sacred implement. Such objects and incidents were spoken about in Tikopia with a sentimentality which, while sometimes almost cloying, was nevertheless touching to me. From the scientific point of view this all meant that there was an atmosphere of receptivity and cooperation in our work. In 1952, as in 1928/9, the

anthropologists were welcomed as being "just like Tikopia," polite inclusions were still used in regard to "our" canoe, "our" orchard, and "our" kin group. Immediately on my arrival I was greeted by kinship terms appropriately readjusted to recognize advances of age and status. The new Ariki Tuamako, for example, son of the chief whom I had known and with whom I was on brotherly terms, greeted me outside his house when I arrived with "*E aue! Toku mana.*" "Oh alas (how long since we met) my father!" Spillius too was rapidly absorbed into a wide kinship field, and speedily created other kin and friendship ties.

In 1952, then, the anthropologists were not feared and their general intentions towards the Tikopia were not suspect. In 1929 there had been some questions as to whether the taking of photographs might not be dangerous to the subjects; in 1952 no such questions arose and we were invited to photograph even the most sacred rites. Photographs were well-known and admired by all Tikopia. Indeed, one Tikopia, Vakasaumore, actually had a camera of his own with which he took photographs. In 1928/9 my private discussions were an object of great suspicion to the Tikopia at first because of the religious knowledge which they thought might be divulged. In 1952/3, while some of our private sessions were suspect for political reasons, because of local controversy over relations with Government and the Mission, in general they were accepted as part of the technique of the anthropologist. Again, when in 1952 meetings of chiefs were held privately, without inviting us, it was not for religious reasons but for political reasons. In the ritual sphere information, even when most esoteric, was freely given. It was expressly stated that all the essential facts had been revealed to me in 1928/9 and, therefore, there was no point in further concealment. The same attitude applied to my colleague as to me. Moreover, the Tikopia had learned that all Europeans did not come with destructive intent. Hence, right from the outset not only were we allowed free access to the most sacred religious rituals, we were enthusiastically invited to participate.

In one respect, however, our approach varied from that which I adopted in 1929. Then, for the most part, I refrained from advising Tikopia in regard to their relations with Government and the Church. I had given them opinions when asked on the attitude of the Government about infanticide and similar questions, and endeavoured to clarify their minds on what were to them obscure issues, including the relations between Government and the Mission. I also discussed Tikopia problems with Government representatives and Melanesian Mission authorities, and tried to explain Tikopia attitudes to them. But, apart from such general consultations, I made no attempt to control Tikopia actions. The situation in 1952 was different. The hurricane and threat of famine on the one hand, and our possession of radio-telephonic communication on the other, made it almost impossible for us to hold aloof from the decisions

of the Tikopia on practical problems. We reported to the Government on the situation, as it developed. We reported the intentions of the Government and transmitted the questions of Government to the Tikopia. This involved two things: it meant deciding on the most effective channel of communication and reply, in particular deciding on what subjects Tikopia should be asked for views to be transmitted to Government. It also meant assisting the Tikopia to put their point of view in terms most easily understood by Government. There was also a further development. When the Government decided to send relief supplies of food, they also decided that in the absence of a fully established local administrative system, we must supervise the distribution. This involved an active intervention in Tikopia affairs, which needs no justification by ordinary humanitarian standards, and is fully defensible on purely scientific grounds inasmuch as, without it, the continuance of our work would have been impossible. Such intervention was continued and extended by Spillius after I left, when the lessening of public order through widespread theft of food supplies seemed for a while to have imperilled the stability of Tikopia society, and when the Tikopia eagerly sought guidance on Government policy and actions. But for the most part our role was that of prime consultants or social catalysts. We helped the Tikopia to explore the possibilities of a situation and decide for themselves what was best to be done in the light of the fuller knowledge we could give them. In the last resort, as Spillius has pointed out, even when the food situation was most desperate, and social order seemed most in danger, it was the Tikopia who eventually decided what should be done and carried out their decisions.

In other words, Tikopia society in 1952/3 was not one where radical changes occurred primarily through the presence of European residents. The presence of European social scientists, explaining and elucidating new external influences against the Tikopia background and concepts, in sympathetic relation with leading Tikopia, allowed some local forces and potentialities to come to expression more effectively than might otherwise have been the case. But great sections of Tikopia life were carried on without reference to the presence of the anthropologists.

From some points of view, our work—especially that of Spillius—could be regarded as an essay in applied anthropology.<sup>2</sup> But even as such, it had to be distinguished very clearly from the type of active incorporation of an anthropological analysis in the developmental work of a community such as that envisaged in the conventional community development project or in the “action anthropology” type of programme.

<sup>2</sup> This is exemplified by the special commendation given in 1953 by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Spillius for his efforts during the famine.

# ECOLOGICAL APPROACHES

## 10 The Concept and Method of Cultural Ecology



Julian H. Steward

A TIDE SWEEPED THROUGH THE SCIENCES IN THE NINETEENTH AND EARLY twentieth century and eroded one of the basic concepts of the past, the idea of simple causal relationships, the immediate and sole dependence of a thing or event upon a particular prior thing or event. This sweeping theoretical change did not wipe out determinism but conditioned scientists to look for multifaceted relationships and fields of interactivity on all levels of analysis.

Geography and anthropology also felt the effects of this shift. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the analysis of the ties between specific physical environments and the cultures associated with them. Eschewing simple geographical determinism, students from both disciplines converged on an approach which stresses mutuality and the establishment of states of equilibrium which may be upset by unilateral alterations of either environment or culture. Called "cultural ecology," the implications of this approach are given general treatment in the selection that follows.

SOURCE: *Theory of Culture Change* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1955), pp. 30-42. Reprinted by permission of the author and publisher.

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### *Objectives in Ecological Studies*

At the risk of adding further confusion to an already obscure term, this chapter undertakes to develop the concept of ecology in relation to human beings as an heuristic device for understanding the effect of environment upon culture. In order to distinguish the present purpose and method from those implied in the concepts of biological, human, and social ecology, the term *cultural ecology* is used. Since cultural ecology is not generally understood, it is necessary to begin by showing wherein it differs from the other concepts of ecology and then to demonstrate how it must supplement the usual historical approach of anthropology in order to determine the creative processes involved in the adaptation of culture to its environment.

The principal meaning of ecology is "adaptation to environment." Since the time of Darwin, environment has been conceived as the total web of life wherein all plant and animal species interact with one another and with physical features in a particular unit of territory. According to Webster, the biological meaning of ecology is "the mutual relations between organisms and their environment." The concept of adaptive interaction is used to explain the origin of new genotypes in evolution; to explain phenotypical variations; and to describe the web of life itself in terms of competition, succession, climax, gradients, and other auxiliary concepts.

Although initially employed with reference to biotic assemblages, the concept of ecology has naturally been extended to include human beings since they are part of the web of life in most parts of the world. Man enters the ecological scene, however, not merely as another organism which is related to other organisms in terms of his physical characteristics. He introduces the super-organic factor of culture, which also affects and is affected by the total web of life. What to do about this cultural factor in ecological studies has raised many methodological difficulties, as most human and social ecologists have recognized. The principal difficulty lies in the lack of clarity as to the purpose of using the concept of ecology. The interaction of physical, biological, and cultural features within a locale or unit of territory is usually the ultimate objective of study. Human or social ecology is regarded as a subdiscipline of its own right and not as means to some further scientific end. Essentially descriptive, the analysis lacks the clear objectives of biology, which has used ecology heuristically to explain several kinds of biological phenomena. If human or social ecology is considered an operational tool rather than an end in itself, two quite different objectives are suggested: first, an understanding of the organic functions and genetic variations of man as a purely biological species; second, a determination

of how culture is affected by its adaptation to environment. Each requires its own concepts and methods.

The first, or biological objective, involves several somewhat different problems, all of which, however, must view man in the web of life. Since man is a domesticated animal, he is affected physically by all his cultural activities. The evolution of the Hominidae is closely related to the emergence of culture, while the appearance of *Homo sapiens* is probably more the result of cultural causes than of physical causes. The use of tools, fire, shelter, clothing, new foods, and other material adjuncts of existence were obviously important in evolution, but social customs should not be overlooked. Social groups as determined by marriage customs as well as by economic activities in particular environments have undoubtedly been crucial in the differentiations of local populations and may even have contributed to the emergence of varieties and subraces of men.

The problem of explaining man's cultural behavior is of a different order than that of explaining his biological evolution. Cultural patterns are not genetically derived and, therefore, cannot be analyzed in the same way as organic features. Although social ecologists are paying more and more attention to culture in their enquiries, an explanation of culture per se has not, so far as I can see, become their major objective. Culture has merely acquired greater emphasis as one of many features of the local web of life, and the tools of analysis are still predominantly borrowed from biology. Since one of the principal concepts of biological ecology is the community—the assemblage of plants and animals which interact within a locality—social or human ecology emphasizes the human community as the unit of study. But “community” is a very general and meaningless abstraction. If it is conceived in cultural terms, it may have many different characteristics depending upon the purpose for which it is defined. The tendency, however, has been to conceive of human and biological communities in terms of the biological concepts of competition, succession, territorial organization, migration, gradients, and the like. All of these derived fundamentally from the fact that underlying biological ecology is a relentless and raw struggle for existence both within and between species—a competition which is ultimately determined by the genetic potentials for adaptation and survival in particular biotic-environmental situations. Biological co-operation, such as in many forms of symbiosis, is strictly auxiliary to survival of the species.

Human beings do not react to the web of life solely through their genetically-derived organic equipment. Culture, rather than genetic potential for adaptation, accommodation, and survival, explains the nature of human societies. Moreover, the web of life of any local human society may extend far beyond the immediate physical environment and biotic assemblage. In states, nations, and empires, the nature of the local

group is determined by these larger institutions no less than by its local adaptations. Competition of one sort or another may be present, but it is always culturally determined and as often as not co-operation rather than competition may be prescribed. If, therefore, the nature of human communities is the objective of analysis, explanations will be found through use of cultural historical concepts and methods rather than biological concepts, although, as we shall show, historical methods alone are insufficient.

Many writers on social or human ecology have sensed the need to distinguish between biological and cultural phenomena and methods, but they have not yet drawn clear distinctions. Thus, Hollingshead recognizes a difference between an "ecological order [which] is primarily rooted in competition" and "social organization [which] has evolved out of communication." This attempt to conceptualize competition as a category wholly distinct from other aspects of culturally determined behavior is, of course, artificial. Bates, a human biologist, recognizes the importance of culture in determining the nature of communities, but he does not make clear whether he would use human ecology to explain the range of man's biological adaptation under environmental-cultural situations or whether he is interested in man's culture. The so-called Chicago school of Park, Burgess, and their followers were also primarily interested in communities of human beings, especially urban communities. Their methodology as applied to Chicago and other cities treats the components of each as if they were genetically determined species. In analyzing the zoning of a modern city, such categories as retail businesses, wholesale houses, manufacturing firms, and residences of various kinds, and even such additional features as rate of delinquency, are considered as if each were a biological species in competition with one another for zones within the urban area. Such studies are extremely enlightening as descriptive analysis of spacial distributions of kinds of activities within a modern Euro-American city. They do not, however, necessarily throw any light on world-wide ecological urban adaptations, for in other cultures and periods city zoning followed very different culturally prescribed principles. For example, most of the cities of ancient civilizations were rather carefully planned by a central authority for defensive, administrative, and religious functions. Free enterprise, which might have allowed competition for zones between the institutions and subsocieties arising from these functions, was precluded by the culture.

A fundamental scientific problem is involved in these different meanings attached to ecology. Is the objective to find universal laws or processes, or is it to explain special phenomena? In biology, the law of evolution and the auxiliary principles of ecology are applicable to all webs of life regardless of the species and physical environments in-

volved. In social science studies, there is a similar effort to discover universal processes of cultural change. But such processes cannot be conceptualized in biological terms. The social science problem of explaining the origin of unlike behavior patterns found among different societies of the human species is very different from the problems of biological evolution. Analyzing environmental adaptations to show how new cultural patterns arise is a very different matter than seeking universal similarities in such adaptation. Until the processes of cultural ecology are understood in the many particulars exemplified by different cultures in different parts of the world a formulation of universal processes will be impossible.

Hawley, who has given the most recent and comprehensive statement of social ecology, takes cultural phenomena into account far more than his predecessors. He states that man reacts to the web of life as a cultural animal rather than as a biological species. "Each acquisition of new technique or a new use for an old technique, regardless of the source of its origin, alters man's relations with the organisms about him and changes his position in the biotic community." But, preoccupied with the totality of phenomena within the locale and apparently with a search for universal relationships, Hawley makes the local community the focus of interest. The kinds of generalizations which might be found are indicated by the statement: "If we had sufficient knowledge of preliterate peoples to enable us to compare the structure of residence groups arranged in order of size from smallest to largest, we should undoubtedly observe the same phenomena—each increment in size is accompanied by an advance in the complexity of organization." This is the kind of self-evident generalization made by the unilinear evolutionists: cultural progress is manifest in increasing populations, internal specialization, over-all state controls, and other general features.

Hawley is uncertain in his position regarding the effect of environmental adaptations on culture. He states: "The weight of evidence forces the conclusion that the physical environment exerts but a permissive and limiting effect," but he also says that "each habitat not only permits but to a certain extent necessitates a distinctive mode of life." The first statement closely conforms with the widely accepted anthropological position that historical factors are more important than environmental factors, which may be permissive or prohibitive of culture change but are never causative. The second is nearer to the thesis of this paper that cultural ecological adaptations constitute creative processes.

### *Culture, History and Environment*

While the human and social ecologists have seemingly sought universal ecological principles and relegated culture in its local varieties to

a secondary place, anthropologists have been so preoccupied with culture and its history that they have accorded environment only a negligible role. Owing in part to reaction against the "environmental determinists," such as Huntington and Semple, and in part to cumulative evidence that any culture increases in complexity to a large extent because of diffused practices, the orthodox view now holds that history, rather than adaptive processes, explains culture. Since historical "explanations" of culture employ the culture area concept, there is an apparent contradiction. The culture area is a construct of behavioral uniformities which occur within an area of environmental uniformities. It is assumed that cultural and natural areas are generally coterminous because the culture represents an adjustment to the particular environment. It is assumed further, however, that various different patterns may exist in any natural area and that unlike cultures may exist in similar environments.

The cultural-historical approach is, however, also one of relativism. Since cultural differences are not directly attributable to environmental differences and most certainly not to organic or racial differences, they are merely said to represent divergences in cultural history, to reflect tendencies of societies to develop in unlike ways. Such tendencies are not explained. A distinctive pattern develops, it is said, and henceforth is the primary determinant of whether innovations are accepted. Environment is relegated to a purely secondary and passive role. It is considered prohibitive or permissive, but not creative. It allows man to carry on some kinds of activities and it prevents others. The origins of these activities are pushed back to a remote point in time or space, but they are not explained. This view has been best expressed by Forde, who writes:

Neither the world distributions of the various economies, nor their development and relative importance among the particular peoples, can be regarded as simple functions of physical conditions and natural resources. Between the physical environment and human activity there is always a middle term, a collection of specific objectives and values, a body of knowledge and belief: in other words, a cultural pattern. That the culture itself is not static, that it is adaptable and modifiable in relation to physical conditions, must not be allowed to obscure the fact that adaptation proceeds by discoveries and inventions which are themselves in no sense inevitable and which are, in any individual community, nearly all of them acquisitions or impositions from without. The peoples of whole continents have failed to make discoveries that might at first blush seem obvious. Equally important are the restrictions placed by social patterns and religious concepts on the utilization of certain resources or on adaptations to physical conditions.

The habitat at one and the same time circumscribes and affords scope for cultural development in relation to the pre-existing equipment and tendency of

a particular society, and to any new concepts and equipment that may reach it from without.

But if geographical determinism fails to account for the existence and distribution of economies, economic determinism is equally inadequate in accounting for the social and political organizations, the religious beliefs and the psychological attitudes which may be found in the cultures based on those economies. Indeed, the economy may owe as much to the social and ritual pattern as does the character of society to the economy. The possession of particular methods of hunting or cultivating, of certain cultivated plants or domestic animals, in no wise defines the pattern of society. Again, there is interaction and on a new plane. As physical conditions may limit the possibilities of the economy, so the economy may in turn be a limiting or stimulating factor in relation to the size, density and stability of human settlement, and to the scale of the social and political unit. But it is only one such factor, an advantage may not be taken of the opportunities it affords. The tenure and transmission of land and other property, the development and relations of social classes, the nature of government, the religious and ceremonial life—all these are parts of a social superstructure, the development of which is conditioned not only by the foundations of habitat and economy, but by complex interactions within its own fabric and by external contacts, often largely indifferent to both the physical background and to the basic economy alike.

### *Cultural Ecology*

Cultural ecology differs from human and social ecology in seeking to explain the origin of particular cultural features and patterns which characterize different areas rather than to derive general principles applicable to any cultural-environmental situation. It differs from the relativistic and neo-evolutionist conceptions of culture history in that it introduces the local environment as the extracultural factor in the fruitless assumption that culture comes from culture. Thus, cultural ecology presents both a problem and a method. The problem is to ascertain whether the adjustments of human societies to their environments require particular modes of behavior or whether they permit latitude for a certain range of possible behavior patterns. Phrased in this way, the problem also distinguishes cultural ecology from "environmental determinism" and its related theory "economic determinism" which are generally understood to contain their conclusions within the problem.

The problem of cultural ecology must be further qualified, however, through use of a supplementary conception of culture. According to the holistic view, all aspects of culture are functionally interdependent upon one another. The degree and kind of interdependency, however, are not the same with all features. Elsewhere, I have offered the concept of *cultural core*—the constellation of features which are most closely

related to subsistence activities and economic arrangements. The core includes such social, political, and religious patterns as are empirically determined to be closely connected with these arrangements. Innumerable other features may have great potential variability because they are less strongly tied to the core. These latter, or secondary features, are determined to a greater extent by purely cultural-historical factors—by random innovations or by diffusion—and they give the appearance of outward distinctiveness to cultures with similar cores. Cultural ecology pays primary attention to those features which empirical analysis shows to be most closely involved in the utilization of environment in culturally prescribed ways.

The expression “culturally prescribed ways” must be taken with caution, for its anthropological usage is frequently “loaded.” The normative concept, which views culture as a system of mutually reinforcing practices backed by a set of attitudes and values, seems to regard all human behavior as so completely determined by culture that environmental adaptations have no effect. It considers that the entire pattern of technology, land use, land tenure, and social features derive entirely from culture. Classical illustrations of the primacy of cultural attitudes over common sense are that the Chinese do not drink milk nor the Eskimo eat seals in summer.

Cultures do, of course, tend to perpetuate themselves, and change may be slow for such reasons as those cited. But over the millennia cultures in different environments have changed tremendously, and these changes are basically traceable to new adaptations required by changing technology and productive arrangements. Despite occasional cultural barriers, the useful arts have spread extremely widely, and the instances in which they have not been accepted because of pre-existing cultural patterns are insignificant. In pre-agricultural times, which comprised perhaps 99 per cent of cultural history, technical devices for hunting, gathering, and fishing seem to have diffused largely to the limits of their usefulness. Clubs, spears, traps, bows, fire, containers, nets, and many other cultural features spread across many areas, and some of them throughout the world. Later, domesticated plants and animals also spread very rapidly within their environmental limits, being stopped only by formidable ocean barriers.

Whether or not new technologies are valuable is, however, a function of the society's cultural level as well as of environmental potentials. All pre-agricultural societies found hunting and gathering techniques useful. Within the geographical limits of herding and farming, these techniques were adopted. More advanced techniques, such as metallurgy, were acceptable only if certain pre-conditions, such as stable population, leisure time, and internal specialization were present. These

conditions could develop only from the cultural ecological adaptations of an agricultural society.

The concept of cultural ecology, however, is less concerned with the origin and diffusion of technologies than with the fact that they may be used differently and entail different social arrangements in each environment. The environment is not only permissive or prohibitive with respect to these technologies, but special local features may require social adaptations which have far-reaching consequences. Thus, societies equipped with bows, spears, surrounds, chutes, brush-burning, dead-falls, pitfalls, and other hunting devices may differ among themselves because of the nature of the terrain and fauna. If the principal game exists in large herds, such as herds of bison or caribou, there is advantage in co-operative hunting, and considerable numbers of peoples may remain together throughout the year. If, however, the game is nonmigratory, occurring in small and scattered groups, it is better hunted by small groups of men who know their territory well. In each case, the cultural repertory of hunting devices may be about the same, but in the first case the society will consist of multifamily or multilineage groups, as among the Athabaskans and Algonkians of Canada and probably the pre-horse Plains bison hunters, and in the second case it will probably consist of localized patrilineal lineages or bands, as among the Bushmen, Congo Negritoes, Australians, Tasmanians, Fuegians, and others. These latter groups consisting of patrilineal bands are similar, as a matter of fact, not because their total environments are similar—the Bushmen, Australians, and southern Californians live in deserts, the Negritoes in rain forests, and the Fuegians in a cold, rainy area—but because the nature of the game and therefore of their subsistence problem is the same in each case.

Other societies having about the same technological equipment may exhibit other social patterns because the environments differ to the extent that the cultural adaptations must be different. For example, the Eskimo use bows, spears, traps, containers and other widespread technological devices, but, owing to the limited occurrence of fish and sea mammals, their population is so sparse and co-operative hunting is so relatively unrewarding that they are usually dispersed in family groups. For a different but equally compelling reason the Nevada Shoshoni were also fragmented into family groups. In the latter case, the scarcity of game and the predominance of seeds as the subsistence basis greatly restricted economic co-operation and required dispersal of the society into fairly independent family groups.

In the examples of the primitive hunting, gathering, and fishing societies, it is easy to show that if the local environment is to be exploited by means of the culturally-derived techniques, there are limita-



tions upon the size and social composition of the groups involved. When agricultural techniques are introduced, man is partially freed from the exigencies of hunting and gathering, and it becomes possible for considerable aggregates of people to live together. Larger aggregates, made possible by increased population and settled communities, provide a higher level of sociocultural integration, the nature of which is determined by the local types of sociocultural integration. [See No. II:29.]

The adaptative processes we have described are properly designated ecological. But attention is directed not simply to the human community as part of the total web of life but to such cultural features as are affected by the adaptations. This in turn requires that primary attention be paid only to relevant environmental features rather than to the web of life for its own sake. Only those features to which the local culture ascribes importance need be considered.

### *The Method of Cultural Ecology*

Although the concept of environmental adaptation underlies all cultural ecology, the procedures must take into account the complexity and level of the culture. It makes a great deal of difference whether a community consists of hunters and gatherers who subsist independently by their own efforts or whether it is an outpost of a wealthy nation, which exploits local mineral wealth and is sustained by railroads, ships, or airplanes. In advanced societies, the nature of the culture core will be determined by a complex technology and by productive arrangements which themselves have a long cultural history.

Three fundamental procedures of cultural ecology are as follows:

First, the interrelationship of exploitative or productive technology and environment must be analyzed. This technology includes a considerable part of what is often called "material culture," but all features may not be of equal importance. In primitive societies, subsistence devices are basic: weapons and instruments for hunting and fishing; containers for gathering and storing food; transportation devices used on land and water; sources of water and fuel; and, in some environments, means of counteracting excessive cold (clothing and housing) or heat. In more developed societies, agriculture and herding techniques and manufacturing of crucial implements must be considered. In an industrial world, capital and credit arrangements, trade systems and the like are crucial. Socially-derived needs—special tastes in foods, more ample housing and clothing, and a great variety of appurtenances to living—become increasingly important in the productive arrangement as culture develops; and yet these originally were probably more often effects of basic adaptations than causes.

Relevant environmental features depend upon the culture. The

simpler cultures are more directly conditioned by the environment than advanced ones. In general, climate, topography, soils, hydrography, vegetational cover, and fauna are crucial, but some features may be more important than others. The spacing of water holes in the desert may be vital to a nomadic seed-gathering people, the habits of game will affect the way hunting is done, and the kinds and seasons of fish runs will determine the habits of riverine and coastal tribes.

Second, the behavior patterns involved in the exploitation of a particular area by means of a particular technology must be analyzed. Some subsistence patterns impose very narrow limits on the general mode of life of the people, while others allow considerable latitude. The gathering of wild vegetable products is usually done by women who work alone or in small groups. Nothing is gained by co-operation and in fact women come into competition with one another. Seed-gatherers, therefore, tend to fragment into small groups unless their resources are very abundant. Hunting, on the other hand, may be either an individual or a collective project, and the nature of hunting societies is determined by culturally prescribed devices for collective hunting as well as by the species. When surrounds, grass-firing, corrals, chutes, and other co-operative methods are employed, the take per man may be much greater than what a lone hunter could bag. Similarly, if circumstances permit, fishing may be done by groups of men using dams, weirs, traps, and nets as well as by individuals.

The use of these more complex and frequently co-operative techniques, however, depends not only upon cultural history—i.e., invention and diffusion—which makes the methods available but upon the environment and its flora and fauna. Deer cannot be hunted advantageously by surrounds, whereas antelope and bison may best be hunted in this way. Slash-and-burn farming in tropical rain forests requires comparatively little co-operation in that a few men clear the land after which their wives plant and cultivate the crops. Dry farming may or may not be co-operative; and irrigation farming may run the gamut of enterprises of ever-increasing size based on collective construction of waterworks.

The exploitative patterns not only depend upon the habits concerned in the direct production of food and of goods but upon facilities for transporting the people to the source of supply or the goods to the people. Watercraft have been a major factor in permitting the growth of settlements beyond what would have been possible for a foot people. Among all nomads, the horse has had an almost revolutionary effect in promoting the growth of large bands.

The third procedure is to ascertain the extent to which the behavior patterns entailed in exploiting the environment affect other aspects of culture. Although technology and environment prescribe that certain

things must be done in certain ways if they are to be done at all, the extent to which these activities are functionally tied to other aspects of culture is a purely empirical problem. I have shown elsewhere that the occurrence of patrilineal bands among certain hunting peoples and of fragmented families among the Western Shoshoni is closely determined by their subsistence activities, whereas the Carrier Indians are known to have changed from a composite hunting band to a society based upon moieties and inherited statuses without any change in the nature of subsistence. In the irrigation areas of early civilizations the sequence of socio-political forms or cultural cores seems to have been very similar despite variation in many outward details or secondary features of these cultures. If it can be established that the productive arrangements permit great latitude in the sociocultural type, then historical influences may explain the particular type found. The problem is the same in considering modern industrial civilizations. The question is whether industrialization allows such latitude that political democracy, communism, state socialism, and perhaps other forms are equally possible, so that strong historical influences, such as diffused ideology—e.g., propaganda—may supplant one type with another, or whether each type represents an adaptation which is specific to the area.

The third procedure requires a genuinely holistic approach, for if such factors as demography, settlement pattern, kinship structures, land tenure, land use, and other key cultural features are considered separately, their interrelationships to one another and to the environment cannot be grasped. Land use by means of a given technology permits a certain population density. The clustering of this population will depend partly upon where resources occur and upon transportation devices. The composition of these clusters will be a function of their size, of the nature of subsistence activities, and of cultural-historical factors. The ownership of land or resources will reflect subsistence activities on the one hand and the composition of the group on the other. Warfare may be related to the complex of factors just mentioned. In some cases, it may arise out of competition for resources and have a national character. Even when fought for individual honors or religious purposes, it may serve to nucleate settlements in a way that must be related to subsistence activities.

### *The Methodological Place of Cultural Ecology*

Cultural ecology has been described as a methodological tool for ascertaining how the adaptation of a culture to its environment may entail certain changes. In a larger sense, the problem is to determine whether similar adjustments occur in similar environments. Since in any

given environment, culture may develop through a succession of very unlike periods, it is sometimes pointed out that environment, the constant, obviously has no relationship to cultural type. This difficulty disappears, however, if the level of sociocultural integration represented by each period is taken into account. Cultural types therefore, must be conceived as constellations of core features which arise out of environmental adaptations and which represent similar levels of integration.

Cultural diffusion, of course, always operates, but in view of the seeming importance of ecological adaptations its role in explaining culture has been greatly overestimated. The extent to which the large variety of world cultures can be systematized in categories of types and explained through cross-cultural regularities of developmental process is purely an empirical matter. Hunches arising out of comparative studies suggest that there are many regularities which can be formulated in terms of similar levels and similar adaptations.

# 11 Economic Systems in Ecological Perspective: The Case of the Northwest Coast



Andrew P. Vayda

IN ADDITION TO THE GENERAL STATEMENT ABOUT CULTURAL ECOLOGY MADE by Julian H. Steward (II:10), the first volume of these Readings includes several specific ecological treatments of human evolution (especially I:11) and archeology (especially I:40; I:43). We turn now to an explicit attempt to gain greater understanding of the workings of a "primitive" economic system through the use of an ecological framework. It is particularly fitting that this be done in the context of Northwest Coast culture, since the economic institutions of the Northwest Coast have been used either as an example of uneconomic behavior, as the property destructions of the potlatch have been emphasized, or even as an unconscious parody of capitalism. Even more offensive to some scholars has been the interpretation of Northwest Coast economic systems in terms of two discrete and exclusive sectors, one said to be real and practical and subsistence-oriented, and the other ceremonial and given to prestige. While the problems contingent on analysis of non-classical economies remain (see II:14 and II:15), it is obvious that their solutions must implicate an ecological dimension.

SOURCE: "A Re-examination of Northwest Coast Economic Systems," *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Ser. II, Vol. 23, No. 7 (May 1961), pp. 618-624. Reprinted by permission of the author and the New York Academy of Sciences.

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The potlatching and associated practices of the Indians of the Northwest Coast of North America have been characterized by scholars as topsy-turvy, nonadaptive, nonfunctional, absurdly wasteful, and little related to problems of livelihood. A new perspective from which the customs in question may be viewed is provided by a study of the Coast Salish socioeconomic system published by Wayne Suttles in 1960. The perspective is important as well as new, for it suggests that conclusions about the nonadaptive or nonfunctional character of Northwest Coast economic systems are premature and may indeed be entirely unwarranted. This is a matter to which I shall return in my concluding remarks. I shall now summarize some salient features of Suttles' interpretation of the socioeconomic system of the Coast Salish Indians of Southern Georgia Strait and the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

(1) There were exchanges of relatively perishable foodstuffs for durable "wealth" or prestige goods between Coast Salish village communities. People in one community took food to their affinal relatives in another and received wealth (such as blankets, shell ornaments, hide shirts, and fine baskets) in return.

(2) A main incentive, or personal motivation, for giving foodstuffs and getting wealth seems to have been the desire to get enough wealth so that prestige might be acquired by dispensing that wealth.

(3) In the Coast Salish area under consideration, there were significant variations from place to place and from time to time in just how effective food production was. This meant that community A at some given time might be able to get more food than it could consume by itself, while community B at the same time might be short of food supplies. At some other time, community B might have the "superabundance" while community A experienced a shortage. Because of such variations, the intercommunity food-for-wealth exchanges might well have been advantageous in the long run for the communities involved.

(4) It may be assumed that in certain short runs (for example, in periods of two or three years) some particular communities might have considerably more success than others in the production of food that could be taken elsewhere in return for wealth. There would be this differential success if food production in some of the communities, but not others, was disturbed or kept low by such conditions as bad weather, bad salmon runs, and warfare. The effect of the differential success in food production would be differences among communities in the amounts of wealth accumulated.

(5) Potlatching by a community consisted of feasting the members of other communities and distributing wealth to them. The motivation to potlatch in order to gain or validate prestige and status appears to have been fairly constant and therefore cannot be used to explain why there was potlatching at one time and place and not another. To explain this,

the amount of wealth in the community seems more relevant. A community had to have a certain accumulation of wealth before it could potlatch, and the likelihood of potlatching by the community would increase as the amount of wealth in the community increased.

(6) Potlatching had the effect of redistributing wealth among communities involved in the food-for-wealth exchanges. In other words, the potlatches tended to reduce inequalities in the possession of wealth among communities. This meant that the incentive to produce food and perhaps to maximize food production in order to get wealth and prestige could continue. People could go on acquiring wealth by producing foodstuffs in one community and taking them to other communities.

The emphasis in Suttles' interpretation, as in the summary that I have just given, is on the *intercommunity* rather than *intracommunity* distribution of goods. The latter was, however, related to the former. Persons or families receiving food from members of other communities invited members of their own community to partake of the food at feasts. Thus the movement of food from one community to another did not lead to major inequalities in the distribution of food within the receiving community.

It must be said that while this is made clear enough by Suttles, he does not give an adequate account of the distribution of food within the giving rather than the receiving community. Informants are cited to the effect that a man could at any time take food to affinal relatives in another locality. However, can we be sure that this was so? Could or would a man take food to affinal relatives in another community at a time when some members of his own community were very short of food? It seems likely that some sanctions were operating to prevent this from happening very often. Suttles states that a person taking food to another community invited members of his own local group to help him transport it. This suggests that any food-taking expedition was a somewhat public affair among the Coast Salish and that if there were strong feelings that the food should be kept within the home community, there would have been the means and opportunities for expressing these feelings. Moreover, to *give* food away to community members was a moral action in return for which a person could expect prestige. If a man could get prestige directly from members of his own local group in return for food, he might be less inclined to try to get it from them by taking the food to another place, getting wealth in return, and then dispensing that wealth in order to gain prestige within his community.

These considerations suggest that people might have tended to take food to another community not at any time and not whenever they themselves had some kind of surplus but rather only when the community as a whole had some kind of surplus. When the community as a whole had this, it was in its interest to have food taken elsewhere in return for

wealth. The wealth acquired could gain prestige not only for individuals eventually dispensing the wealth or contributing it to some community occasion, but also for the entire community when it was the host at a potlatch. Moreover, if the wealth failed to be used in potlatching, it might still serve to attract food bringers to the community at future times. Furthermore, as mentioned before, any food brought was distributed among community members. Additional research needs to be done on the relation between the intracommunity and intercommunity distributions of goods.

In general, the re-examination of Northwest Coast economies begun in 1959 by Suttles, by myself, and by our students at the University of British Columbia is still in a preliminary stage. However, a picture of self-regulating systems in Northwest Coast economies other than the Coast Salish economies is beginning to emerge. By way of illustration, I shall refer briefly to some of the findings and interpretations made by a former University of British Columbia student, Stuart Piddocke, regarding the Kwakiutl economic system.

The chief subsistence activities of the Kwakiutl Indians were sea fishing, river fishing, berry picking, and the hunting of land and sea mammals. It is clear that the amounts of food resulting from these activities varied from place to place and from season to season. Piddocke, however, cites evidence of not only seasonal and local but also considerable year-to-year variation in food production, a kind of variation that has an importance perhaps not so obvious to students who speak of the Kwakiutl's "fantastic surplus economy" and their "production far in excess of subsistence requirements." That the fantastic surpluses and the production far in excess of subsistence requirements may have been only occasional rather than regular features of Kwakiutl economics is indicated by varied data. For example, we may cite the considerable year-to-year variation shown in the statistics on herring spawning in British Columbia coastal waters and in the statistics on the packs of canned sockeye and other salmon taken at Rivers Inlet in Kwakiutl territory from 1882 to 1954. Recent investigations indicate that among the conditions responsible for the year-to-year fluctuations in the size of Pacific salmon populations are such environmental factors as variable water levels and temperatures in the spawning streams, occasional extreme floods, variable temperatures and salinity in the ocean, and the variable freshwater runoffs and the action of tides, currents, winds, and deep-water upwelling in the estuarine and inshore waters that are the habitat of the young salmon for weeks or perhaps months before they reach the open seas. These kinds of variable environmental conditions are likely to have influenced the size of salmon populations in previous centuries as well as in the present one and may therefore be cited as another indication that the production of food by



particular Kwakiutl communities may have been far less in excess of subsistence requirements in some years than in others during the period when the Kwakiutl still had their old culture. Also noteworthy are ethnological references to hungry Kwakiutl tribes and a reference in Kwakiutl mythology to a "starving people [who] pay for food with dressed elkskins, slaves, canoes and even their daughters."

The last reference is of interest not only as an indication of important temporal variations in food production. It suggests also that the Kwakiutl, like the Coast Salish, had mechanisms for converting wealth into food and food into wealth. The existence of such mechanisms is suggested also by references in Kwakiutl mythology to people who "go out in canoes and buy food from another tribe," "a man [who] catches many herrings at his beach . . . [and] sells them for slaves," and a "chief [who] goes out and buys many cherries from the neighboring tribe." In historical times, food-for-wealth exchanges are well documented. For example, Boas mentions the "selling" of blankets for food among the 19th century Kwakiutl. Food could also be sold for money in the historical period, and the money could in turn be used either for the acquisition of prestige goods or else for getting food at some later time. No doubt the Kwakiutl, like the Coast Salish, had some restrictions upon making food-for-wealth exchanges, but what the restrictions were is not clear.

The Kwakiutl system was, of course, not exactly the same as the Coast Salish one. Thus it may be noted that among the Kwakiutl there does not appear to have been the Coast Salish requirement that inter-community food-for-wealth exchanges be between affinal relatives. Nevertheless, Piddocke is able to propose a reinterpretation of Kwakiutl economics similar to Suttles' reinterpretation of Coast Salish economics. Among the Kwakiutl, as among the Coast Salish, relatively perishable subsistence goods could be "converted" into more durable wealth. The wealth, if not reconverted at a later time into food, could be converted at potlatches into prestige. Prestige too might be reconverted. For example, if group A gave to group B an amount of wealth exceeding in value that which B subsequently required, then B might be giving up some of its prestige to A in return for the "excess" amount of wealth that A had given.

The famous Kwakiutl practice of not distributing but rather destroying such goods as blankets and coppers in order to gain prestige may also be regarded as a mechanism reducing inequalities in the distribution of goods among communities. It is possible, however, that the mechanism was in operation but rarely, if at all, in precontact times and that it became important among the Kwakiutl only in the latter historical period when, because of such commercial activities as fur trading, fishing, and logging, the inequalities in the distribution of goods devel-

oped more quickly and more markedly than before. In Kwakiutl mythology, which presumably reflects the older culture, the destruction of property, whether in potlatches or under other circumstances, is unimportant. Boas' volume *Kwakiutl Culture as Reflected in Mythology* has only the following to say about it: "In myths the destruction of property occurs only in connection with the cannibal ceremony when the cannibal devours his own slaves or is given slaves to eat. Canoe breaking during a potlatch occurs in a tale in which the person who breaks canoes owned by others makes them whole again by his magical powers. . . . A man pushes a copper under a mountain during a feast. . . ."

More significant perhaps is the fact that the destruction of property does not seem to have been mentioned in the accounts that we have of Kwakiutl potlatches even in the 1870s and 1880s. Did the destruction of property become a prominent feature of Kwakiutl potlatching only in the last years of the 19th century? Perhaps so.

We may note that not only the greater destructiveness but also the apparently greater frequency of Kwakiutl potlatches may have been a late 19th century adjustment to the influx of new wealth. Because the inequalities in the distribution of wealth developed more quickly and more markedly than before, the mechanisms reducing the inequalities had to be in operation more often if the old system was to be maintained.

### *Concluding Remarks*

Much research on Northwest Coast economies still needs to be done. I have the hope, however, that focussing attention right now upon possible interpretations, such as those that I have been proposing, will be a means for stimulating and guiding further investigations.

It may very well be asked why the Northwest Coast Indians *should* have had the kind of economic systems that I have been suggesting they *may* have had. In order to answer this, it would be necessary to try to indicate, among other things, the advantages that having these economic systems would have given to the people and the adversities from which it would have protected them. A hypothesis to which I have already alluded is suggested by the interpretations of Suttles and Piddocke: namely, that as the effectiveness of food production was varying from time to time and place to place, there were movements and counter-movements of food, wealth, and prestige from person to person and from group to group in such a way as to minimize the adverse effects (starvation, hostilities against neighbors, and death) of any local and temporary lack of success in food production. In more general terms, the hypothesis is that the self-regulating economic systems served to distribute goods in a way that contributed to the survival and well-being of the people.

In considering a hypothesis of this kind, we are returning to the issues raised earlier about the adaptiveness or nonadaptiveness of Northwest Coast economic systems. In the absence of more complete data on the movements of goods, especially on the directions, timing, frequencies, and magnitude of the movements, our hypothesis cannot of course be regarded as proved. Nevertheless the mere fact that it seems both plausible and consistent with the extant evidence suffices to show that it is premature and unwarranted to conclude that the potlatching and associated customs of the Northwest Coast Indians were topsyturvy, nonadaptive, nonfunctional, absurdly wasteful, or little related to problems of livelihood.

## 12 The Theory of Oriental Society



Karl August Wittfogel

IT IS PROBABLY NOT VALID TO MEASURE THE IMPORTANCE OF A THEORY BY the controversy it has generated. Nonetheless, we are all familiar with a number of great theories which were born in disputation, survived numerous premature announcements that they had been disproved or discarded, and which continue to inform us and to nurture new arguments. Such has been the case, among others, with the contributions of Darwin, Marx, Freud—and Karl August Wittfogel.

Although Wittfogel in recent years has emphasized aspects of his theory which give a greater role to individual volition, so that in a philosophical sense he would associate more with Opler (II:2) than with White (II:3), his theory can be read as one of the great attempts to un-

SOURCE: "Die Theorie der orientalischen Gesellschaft," *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* VII (1938), pp. 90-122. The version which appears here was made from a translation by the Far Eastern and Russian Institute of the University of Washington and completely revised for this book in February 1959, by Dr. Wittfogel. Reprinted with the permission of the author, publisher, and translator.

Karl August Wittfogel (b. 1896) is Professor of Chinese History at the University of Washington and Adjunct Professor of Chinese History at Columbia University. For forty years he has been involved in extensive research into the comparative history of institutions. While he has not undertaken anthropological fieldwork, Wittfogel has been influenced by anthropology and has had major impact on anthropological theory, particularly in the area of developmental regularities. Wittfogel has written much. Among his works are *The History of Chinese Society: Liao* (with Fêng Chia-shêng, 1949) and *Oriental Despotism* (1957; available now in paperback). He has recently received a grant to continue his study of contemporary Chinese political developments.

derstand the evolution of civilization in fundamentally ecological terms. Stripped to essentials, the theory of Oriental society maintains that agricultural systems are of two kinds, each with its own developmental concomitants. One requires great mobilization of labor for irrigation and drainage; the other has no such pressing requirements, its rainfall is generally sufficient and floods are not a big problem. In a fairly direct sense, then, the theory traces back to ecological conditions specific developments not only of economic and political institutions, but ideology as well.

Like all important theories, that of Oriental society has deep historical roots, an early version having appeared in the eighteenth century. Among later thinkers who contributed to the development of the theory were Karl Marx and Max Weber, but there have been many others. Indeed, the theory itself has been the source and subject of much political dispute. Until recently, for example, the theory received little attention, and that mostly invective, from Marxist scholars. Then, in the sixties the theory was taken up again in French intellectual circles and elsewhere.

The concept of Oriental society was created because of the difficulty of comprehending the economies of ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt, and of India and China, on the basis of established understanding of Greece and Rome, of feudal Europe or modern capitalist society. Though called "Oriental," the theory has been applied extensively to developments in the New World, particularly to the pre-Conquest civilizations of the Andes. Anthropologists and archeologists have been particularly stimulated by the theory without necessarily agreeing with all of its assertions or implications.

With the passage of years, Dr. Wittfogel insists ever more strongly that some of the gravest problems of contemporary international politics can be understood only in light of the theory with which he is so intimately associated. Recent increase in interest in the theory cannot be taken as acceptance. Nevertheless, its sheer intellectual weight and its fascinating juxtaposition of cultural and environmental factors command our attention.

### *Abstract*

The article starts with a clarification of the economic importance of certain material elements which underlie the agricultural labor process—land and water. Artificial irrigation has the significance of a primary determining factor, for, by requiring relatively intense forms of labor, it excludes slave labor as an essential element. The true "oriental" form of production first arises when waterworks must be undertaken on a larger scale (for purposes of protection and irrigation). On a lower level of

technical development, the state then acquires a specific economic function: public works and astronomy. A differentiated form of society comes into being; at its base are the peasants, either bound to the village or—later—free; the upper ranks comprise the autocratic sovereign and an administrative, religious, and military bureaucracy. The pure oriental type in its simple form is exemplified by the old Inca society before its destruction. The higher form (with the development of inner contradictions) was attained by India, Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt, China, among others. The “compact” hydraulic type, e.g. Babylonia, displays a different form of crisis from the “loose” hydraulic type of China. In the latter, the agricultural crisis is conditioned by extensive mobilization of arable land and by the cooperation of commercial capitalists with the centrifugal upper strata of society. Quasi-feudal or pseudo-feudal traits may be operative in creating a crisis, as in India or China, but they are not the basis of the society, which is different from feudalism in its system of production, social organization, and state. Japan is feudal, or more correctly, “Asiatic”-feudal.

The analysis of the organization of the productive forces makes it possible to explain the stagnation of the oriental agricultural society from the particular, centralized structure of the system of production based on irrigation. This is in contrast to the decentralized nonirrigational agriculture of feudal society, which did not hinder the development of towns and of an industrial capitalism fostered by late feudal absolutism.

“The Theory of Oriental Society” constitutes an attempt to describe both the western and eastern worlds as sectors of one human society, which includes stagnation as well as development as movements of the total historical process.

### 1. *The Problem*

Theoretical concern with the complex of China and its Oriental background needs no detailed justification in the year 1938. The world of historical practise has become small. The intimate connection between the eastern and western segments of human society is shown most directly by the Sino-Japanese War and its repercussions on the remaining centers of historical activity. The scientific analysis of China, which for ten or fifteen years might have seemed either romantic or at all events peripheral, now returns towards the center and becomes a demand of objective necessity.

*Ad hoc* analyses show themselves quickly as inadequate, particularly if they are not presented as the result of previous thorough preparation. Critical theory teaches that an actual historical phenomenon becomes understandable only if it is taken in its full historical and spatial perspec-

tive. The laws of movement within Chinese society only reveal themselves truly if they are developed genetically. The same is true of the neighboring complex of Japan, concerning which we must know whether it is structurally similar to China or different, before we can truly comprehend the peculiar forms of its historic activity. Thus problem leads to problem. Have we, in the case of China, to deal with a social type like that of the western lands, or have we not? If not, what are its distinguishing features? Are there present, in the structure of this state, basic peculiarities corresponding to the (perhaps present) socio-economic peculiarities, which support or correct the general theory of the state, or show it in a new light? Or yet again: if the analysis is to be socio-genetic, at what level is such an analysis to start? The great French historians of the early nineteenth century conceived history as the movements of socially distinguished strata (classes). Critical theory, not satisfied with this, posed the question of the structural principle of all such social formations and conflicts.

From the envisioning of such a basic analysis of history to its realization is a long way. Numerous attempts show at least the extraordinary difficulty of the problem, if they do not indeed demonstrate something more negative: its insolubility. Perhaps, when one postulates the methods of production during an epoch as the first problem of analysis, one has set himself too much to do. Should one perhaps consider history, as did those great Frenchmen, mainly as social history—that is, a history of social movements with introductory remarks on their economic background and with careful simultaneous analysis of political and social phenomena, whose origin may be considered sufficiently explained thereby? Comparative consideration of the scientific historiography of the past decades shows that, apart from the crude forms of a mechanical *Geschichtsökonomismus* ("economic interpretation of history"), scientific analysis has by preference used just such a socio-historical method.

The investigation of a complex like the Chinese, so "new" from the theoretical standpoint and to which a meaningful tradition has not yet been attached, might help to clarify the basic methodological problem. More: if a basic consideration of Oriental and Occidental social development discloses specific basic movement—patterns of the "East" (whatever that may be), then possibly a new point of departure for the methodology of investigating "Western" developments may result. And finally: if material analysis of the eastern world finds out by the best known historical steps that it is not a separately progressive but rather a stationary social complex, there arise out of such an insight some essential conclusions for our conception of social history in general. This conception must then obviously include and explain not only developments but also a historically extremely significant variation: stagnation.

## 2. *Experiment in One Fundamental Analysis*

### A. ARTIFICIAL IRRIGATION AS A SPECIFYING FACTOR IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION.

The social phenomena which we are studying develop at a stage of history below that of capitalistic industry and above that of primitive agrarianism. The latter, in its various manifestations, forms the point of departure. But this point of departure must already have been passed before a specific form of work and life can arise.

The agricultural process of production sets in motion, on the objective level where material analysis commences, two elements in combination: land and water. Differences in the type and productivity of the land, the soil, determine to a large extent the settled social stage of the resultant labor-process; they lead, however, only to variations, not to a fundamentally divergent pattern of the labor-process. This effect proceeds from the second of the chief factors in the means of work—from water. Water gives to the soil and to the plants contained therein as in a vessel, the moisture without which no transfer of nutritive elements into the plant organism and no metabolism of this organism can occur. It also carries with it dissolved organic and, above all, inorganic substances which are required for the nourishment of the plants. The type of climate here comes into play. Apart from the factor of temperature, which affects various stages of agrarian development in various ways, differentiating and limiting them, the factor of rain, caused by the movements of the wind, is decisive. Rain-water may moisten the soil in a timely and quantitatively sufficient manner, or it may not. In the former case the agricultural labor-process can proceed without additional irrigation, while in all other cases agriculture is either completely impossible or can only succeed by means of the planned application of water through socially working men—i.e., by means of artificial irrigation.

Several basic possibilities thus present themselves. The specifying factor in all cases other than the first is the presence or absence of river or of ground-water—i.e., of rain-water which “originates” outside the area in question and then enters this area. (See Table 1.)

The table below offers the specifying types of the water situation in a manner newly defined according to our categories. Of course these facts have not been exactly represented in the maps of physical or economic geography, and yet the agrarian-economic categories which we are trying to analyze can be recognized without difficulty in their spatial arrangement on good maps of climate and vegetation. It is indeed to be borne in mind that the factors we have treated indicate merely the possibility of a corresponding nomadic or agricultural development, not yet



Table 1

Variations of the Water- Situation			Rain for Specific Agricultural Types		Rivers, Ground-Water, etc.		Tendency to—
			Time- liness	Sufficiency	Present?	The Task:	
A	1	a	+	++	a +	a 1 Drainage, Protection	Patterns of Water-Control
		b			b —	a 2 — b —	
	2		+	+		Insignificant	Rainfall agriculture. In case of tempo- rary nomadism, transition to rain- fall agriculture plus cattle- raising.
	3	a	+	+	a —		
		b		+-	b +	Transition to B 1 a	
B	1	a	+	— But enough for Pasture	a +	Supplementary Irrigation	Irrigation Agriculture
		b			b —		Nomadism
	2	a	—	+	a +	Irrigation for the Sake of Insurance	Irrigation Agriculture
		b			b —		Nomadism
	3	a	—	— But enough for Pasture	a — +	Irrigation to Make Agriculture Possible	Irrigation Agriculture
		b			b —		Nomadism
	C	a	—	— No Rain at All	a +	Irrigation to Make Agriculture Possible	Irrigation Agriculture
		b			b —	Desert!	

The sign + means: Sufficient or present in considerable quantity

The sign ++ means: Present in excess

The sign — means: Present only in slight, insufficient quantity

The sign — means: Not present at all

its reality. In order for a primitive social organism to proceed towards agriculture or cattle-raising, certain natural pre-conditions (apart from the activity of the people and the means of work at their disposal) are necessary—above all, in socially simple conditions, the physical existence of a reproductive flora and fauna. Failure to fulfill these conditions either leads, as in the case of Australia, to stagnation on the level of food-gathering, or, as in the case of America, prepares a one-sided agricultural, not pastoral, development. Socially active man creates this form of his history, just like any other form, yet the actuality of his history on each achieved phase of his social production is determined by the pattern of the natural productive forces that can be realized at the moment.

Our table makes one thing immediately clear: just as food-gathering societies originate and exist under very different conditions, so do the societies that cultivate plants and animals. Apart from extreme forms (the desert C b and the super-abundant variant of A 1 a), the water-situations fall into three chief types: the case A 2 with its marginal forms 1 b and 3 a and b (Rain-agriculture); the case B 1 a, 2 a, 3 a, and C a (Irrigation agriculture); and the case B 1 b, 2 b, and 3 b (nomadism), whereby the last two types remarkably enough grow in the main out of similar situations, which will only be varied by a substantial factor (presence or absence of river- or ground-water). The relations of the theoretical categories reflect adequately the relations of the real conditions. The two forms of production are found indeed regularly as the two sides of a related natural basis. Specific social features in the relations between these two production organisms, the mechanism of the economy in the border territories, invasions, the so-called nomad dynasties, the phenomenon of the Great Wall, receive their scientific explanation here from the structure of their productive forces. The great nomadic societies developed in Africa and Asia on the borders of agrarian societies with irrigated agriculture, on which they inflicted from outside effective sociological, military, and political disturbing factors. On the other hand, the nomad areas (B 1 b, 2 b, and 3 b) also border on agrarian lands of Type A 2 and 3, and on more primitive and early feudal agrarian organisms (A 1 without facilities for water control), as in Central Africa. In each case a truly scientific analysis must take into account the already-established categories for the clarification of the entire socio-economic mechanism.

If the "B . . . b"-variant (nomadism) lies outside the sphere of agricultural production, then the water-situation within it is split into two basic types: A and B . . . a plus C a, i.e., into areas where agriculture may be carried on by means of the quantity of water "naturally" furnished by rain, and areas where this is not the case. In the second case it is sometimes possible to find agriculture in the lower forms (more or less A 3 b) set up at first in the hinterland of the still untamable rivers.

Agriculture only attains higher productivity when its practitioners manage to make good the water-deficit by furnishing supplementary water: i.e., by artificial irrigation. The new agrarian technique thereby achieved may be in the beginning an act of necessity, which makes agriculturally poor areas for the first time yield any crop at all. But very soon the new productive method is generalized and now concerned not only with the creation and insurance of a single harvest, but also with the intensification of this harvest and often with its multiplication. Socially working man has found access to a new "nature-machine," whose appropriate application in some circumstances may lead to a garden-like intensification of agriculture such as areas given to rainfall agriculture do not know—at least, not to any considerable degree.

The differentiation of productive powers on the side of nature develops necessarily, as soon as Man brings it about concretely in his work-process, a corresponding differentiation of the socially-conditioned means of work, as well as of animal and human working forces. The more intensive the work-process becomes in the matter of irrigation, the smaller becomes the soil-surface necessary to the reproduction of the immediate producers and the less rewarding becomes the use of work-animals. On the other hand, the more the system of rainfall agriculture extends, the more necessary become effective working tools in order to mobilize the powers of the soil, and the more desirable becomes the use of work-animals (oxen, horses) able to pull these effective implements over the wide fields. In areas of irrigation agriculture, suitably primitive tools will suffice, with a whole arsenal of very refined installations for irrigation often supplementing them. In regions of rainfall agriculture, a more highly developed plow and plow-animals come completely into the foreground, while facilities for irrigation are naturally lacking.

The peculiarity of irrigation-economy expresses itself indeed not only in the special formation of tools and such items. Here, since the success and failure of production depend in the highest degree upon the carefulness of the laborer, a specific type of labor force turns out to be essentially unsuitable: the full slave, without property or family. We have already treated this point in earlier systematic analysis, and further studies in the field of Oriental social economy have confirmed us in this view. There were, to be sure, house-slaves in abundance in the zone of irrigation agriculture, but the slave played an altogether peripheral role in the process of agricultural production. Insofar as he entered it at all, he appeared always, as in handicrafts, in circumstances which mitigated his status as a slave and offered him real incentives to qualified activity. The different position of slaves in late Rome and the "Orient" is thus explained by its material basis. And at the same time the peculiar development of late Rome is similarly explained. As the slave system decayed in consequence of the lack of opportunity to import unfree persons from

the border territories, there resulted a reaction on the natural economy of Western Rome—i.e., on the sector of the state whose agrarian economy was centered about slavery. Eastern Rome, which likewise was affected, managed to maintain itself more or less on a higher economic stage by the production of simple merchandise, and by towns and trade capitalism. For the chief areas of the East—Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor—rely essentially on artificial irrigation. The immediate producers were not as a rule slaves, but peasants of the most diverse types.

#### B. THE GENERAL PATTERN OF WATERWORKS AS A SECOND SPECIFYING FACTOR

The presence or absence of artificial irrigation lends a very definite coloring to the productive powers of agriculture. Yet the qualitative factor alone is not enough. The irrigation water may be of purely local origin. Then the reservoirs may be either individually or locally managed, and no further need for supplementary labor arises. But perhaps the water must be tamed on a larger scale. Streams are to be dyked, reservoirs are to be built, canals are to be dug. Then the great task of waterworks arises, with which at this stage neither the techniques of individuals nor those of local groups are able to cope. In this case the task of water-regulation must be carried out socially, either through a state already established by some other means or through separate groups which unite and become independent through these and other such tasks and so, attaining economic and political power, set themselves up as states.

Another factor enters into this: time keeping. The farming year is throughout determined by the rhythm of the seasons, and a knowledge of this rhythm is everywhere important. But only when the beginning and ending of the rains, the rise and fall of the rivers, becomes vitally important, does the need for a relatively precise calendar arise as an immanent problem of the production-process. In general, where a leading group concentrates in its hands the control of the waters, we find this group and the state which stands behind it as well, in direct or indirect control of astronomy. Thus two new types of productive forces are found which give to the state functions which in other agrarian societies it did not have to fulfill. In the basic strata of an extensive rainfall agriculture, there are only certain military, juridical, and religious functions which are carried out by special ruling groups. The state growing out of this includes a multitude of individual landlords, who finally set up a feudal and hierarchical order, but only in a loose and federal manner. No central economic function gives the state such a decisive preponderance that it can suppress the rebellious feudal lords and make itself absolute in its position. Even if, at the beginning of capitalistic development, the absolute monarch raises himself above the bourgeoisie and the feudal lords, playing the one against the other, he still cannot completely sweep away the old lords of the manor and divert the surplus of the

peasant production which hitherto flowed into the granaries of the feudal lords, into his own treasury.

It is quite otherwise in an irrigation society, in which the control of the waters is carried on socially—i.e., at this stage, by the state. The bureaucratic-priestly-military hierarchy which appears as the state is either from the beginning the sole master of the peasants' fate—in other words, of the peasant's production and its fruits—or it becomes so in the end, with the growing significance of its double economic function (waterworks plus astronomy), by conquering, expropriating, transforming, replacing a feudal landed aristocracy which possibly existed in the economic hinterland of the rivers.

We bring together the results of our considerations so far, in a table which indicates how the various types of productive-power structure lead to different patterns of social-political type. We add Variant III (the society with a slave economy) to Type II (feudalism); they only show higher features than I and II in one aspect, that of local work-organization, while otherwise they show an extremely low development of material and personal productive powers. The other two types are of universal scope; the society with a slave economy, on the other hand, has found but one full expression, in the Greco-Roman world. They rely upon rain-agriculture as does the feudal agrarian order, out of whose seed-forms they probably grew in particular historical circumstances. A perhaps unique situation in the Mediterranean permitted the concentration of a patriarchal agrarian predatory state, to which the enfeebled condition of the Oriental states offered a rich booty. As soon as the state had reached the limits possible to its communications and military techniques, the productive structure, which was only able to reproduce itself by the continual addition of cheap slave labor from the border regions, quickly decayed. The extraordinary world-historical significance which the culture of this epoch has gained for the history of mankind entitles us, in spite of the uniqueness of Type III, to place it beside Forms I and II, by whose side it always goes as a theoretically interesting variant.

A specific totality of essential productive powers is gathered together in a specific manner of production, which corresponds to a specific social condition and an appropriate political order. We designate Type I as Oriental society, not simply because it appeared exclusively in the Orient, but because it appeared there in its most powerful form and because the word "Orient" recalls specific circumstances of soil and, above all, climate, which were indeed of decisive significance for the genesis of this social-economic formation.

Variant II a, which developed most spectacularly in Japan, may be counted, by reason of its basis in irrigation, as an Orientally colored form of the feudal society, a fact which can be expressed terminologi-

cally by the designation of Oriental feudalism. Following historical traditions, we designate the means of production in Type I as Asiatic means of production, the circumstances of production growing out of them as Oriental society, and the state which expresses this society as Oriental absolutism or—in order to emphasize the peculiar strength of this type of state—as Oriental despotism.

With the establishment of these terms we have concluded the first section of our analysis, which lays bare the essential structure of the social organism we are considering. The phenomenon shows a number of features which do not appear to accord with the basic structure. The continuation of the analysis has to determine whether these apparent contradictions are only of a subjective kind or whether they express objective contradictions which may be scientifically explained.

#### C. THE PROBLEM OF SOCIAL AND STATE ORDER

1. *The Simple Form* The first question that should be answered concerns the character of the ruling class. Economically we see the same stratum of the population which dominates either over the totality or at all events over the decisive mass of the most important media of production (Land and Water). The mass of the national surplus product accordingly falls into their hands. Is there such a class in Oriental society, and what is it like?

In order to clarify the basic relations, we must start with a purely Oriental society. Apart from the early forms of Indian society, the Inca state offers a particularly clear picture for this. The peasantry, organized into clans (*Ayllus*) reproduced their own existence by means of collectively regulated agriculture. The surplus production of this very strictly controlled commandeered labor went to the state, which applied it both to the reproduction of the material machinery of the state and to the maintenance of the court, the administrative officers, priests, and the military—i.e., officialdom in its diverse categories. The situation here is completely transparent. The sovereign and his bureaucracy exercise material control over the totality of the cultivated lands, and consequently the surplus production engendered by these lands falls to the ruling class organized as the state. A peculiar form of the relationship between ruling class and state-bureaucracy-plus-court emerges: they are identical. The natural revenue of the land-bound peasantry's labor is paid directly to the ruling bureaucracy. The revenue here is like a tax. A primitive class-arrangement of a classical transparency obtains. The kin group persists and cultivates the soil in partnership, just as the old Indian community, which has partially continued into modern times, knew collective ways of tilling the communal fields.

2. *The Developed Oriental Society* As soon as one has acquainted

Table 2

Methods of Production			
I	II		III
	a	b	
+ Fruitfulness of the soil			+
+ Water for irrigation	+	+ (no water — except rain)	—
— Apparatus for + irrigation	— +	Tools and + work-animals	—
+ —	+	+ —	—
+ Eventually in two — stages	+	+ —	+
+ —	— —	— —	—
+ —	— (+)	— —	—
Village-bound or free peasants. Absolute sov- ereign and bureaucracy (scribes, priests, ad- ministrative officials, officers)		Serfs, feudal lords	Slaves, slave- holders
Centralized absolute bureaucratic state		De-centralized feudal state	Slave- holding state
“The Orient”		Feudalism “Oriental”	Antiq- uity True

oneself with the specific peculiarity of the Oriental state (the ruling class = the sovereign and the bureaucracy), the problem seems to offer no essential difficulty. In fact, things are not that simple. In few areas of Social Science is the condition of theory so confused as here. Certain phenomena of the Oriental world, which in their visible form during the 18th and 19th centuries and in the accounts of Oriental historical science appeared just as importantly meaningful as the picture we have just drawn, are the cause of this. Private property has extended to the countryside. The village community has decayed in many cases, and new social classes have arisen; apart from the private landowners of bureaucratic origin, above all the little and big merchants who as profit-makers and in part even as landowners bring completely new features into the picture which at first was so simple. Can theory explain this change, or is not Oriental society rather dissolved by it and transformed into another kind of social formation?

A great part of the prevailing confusion can be explained by the fact that the original conception of Oriental society occurred in a period—before and shortly after the middle of the 19th century—when neither the social history of Egypt and Babylon nor that of India and China had been handled by modern means. Meanwhile, in the last decade, the documents of the great early Asiatic cultures have been deciphered in great quantity and applied to the unveiling of every land's social history. Especially great steps have lately been made in research into the social history of China. China's thousand-year-old historiography transmitted to the present age a uniquely rich and coherent material for history, which now will be made available with the methods of critical analysis to the social scientists of China and, one may hope, to those of the rest of the world. If one adds the results of the researches carried on in the last decade to the realm of theoretical consideration, it is shown that through the new facts the conception of Oriental society is not shaken or destroyed, but that it is on the contrary deepened, strengthened, and made more specific.

The disintegration of the simple Oriental society may take place from two sides, but basically the dual phenomenon may be reduced to one basic cause. The powers of production grow. Metal implements for agriculture (above all, iron agricultural tools), as well as the development of the technique of irrigation and, in addition, in a certain degree the application of draft animals make the results of tillage much more productive and, at the same time, make individual farming more profitable than the old forms of communal cultivation. Artisanship and also certain branches of industry grow at the same time, together with the greater industrial needs of agriculture and the state-economy. The "free" individual peasant who buys and sells on the market, arises, so that in the



end everything, including his individual land-property, can become merchandise.

On the other side, and in varying degrees, the merchant arises as the agent of the growing circulation. Trade—and some industry—and even money-lending capital is to develop out of this, to some degree in Egypt, to a high degree in Mesopotamia, and quite highly in India and especially China. They attract to themselves a part of the revenue in the form of profit. Private property in land carries with it a further consequence: If the farmer is free to sell his land, then others are free to acquire it. Large private land-holdings appear, occasionally in the hands of the new commercial capitalists, often in the hands of the members of the old upper class, who can obtain the ownership of land not only by purchase but also by gifts from the ruler or by retaining service-land. The social-economic order has become much more flexible. But are its bases thereby abolished?

In Pharaonic Egypt, the influence of commercial capital appears to have been particularly slight. Also in Babylon trade and money-lending remained in the hands of the ruling classes, namely those of the priesthood, the "temple." The phenomenon of a land-owning merchant class appears much more extremely in China. In all cases, however, the mass of the free peasants remains a "public sector" paying taxes and service to the state and its bureaucracy. The key economic positions remain therefore in the hands of the office-holding bureaucracy which controls the greatest part of the surplus work and produce of the farmer. Whatever the new legal forms may be—there may be many—the bureaucracy remains by far the greatest landowner, bringing together in its own hands the greatest proportion of the surplus production and the forced labor. The levies on trade- and money-lending-capital—which by the way may take very diverse forms—and on the private great landowners, who pay less taxes as they grow more powerful, weaken the central power, complicate and contradict the action of the Oriental despotism, though they do not abolish its specific character.

At the end of the development, we therefore find dissolved and still-undissolved village communities, partly unified in a social complex as in India. We find the power of disposition over the farm work and farm production in the hands of the state bureaucracy, in the hands of private officials and officers, of priests (temples), and also in certain circumstances of great merchants. The simple Oriental society has, in consequence of the development of the basic powers of production, transformed itself into the developed Oriental society.

### 3. *Military and Civil Functions of the Dominant Bureaucracy*

Heretofore we have described the upper classes in the simple and the developed Oriental society as if they were at the same time military and civil. This description is not wrong, but it needs more exact definition.

We see before us such societies as Babylon and China, where apparently administrative officials and priests or officials with priestly functions stand at the peak of the social pyramid, while in India the priesthood had to share its power with the warrior caste. In Assyria, the military element even steps clearly into the foreground. Does not this change in the type of the ruling class indicate at the same time a difference in the social-economic substance?

The difference we have noticed is indeed significant, but not in the way an outsider might expect. An officer finds himself economically on the same level as a priest or an administrative official. Both social categories live on revenue in kind or money, which the state has taken from the peasants in the form of taxes, especially the land-tax, and which is distributed, via the state-treasury, to its bureaucracy. The officer, therefore, although professionally resembling the feudal knight is economically far from him, but close to the civil official. His relationship to the mass of the farm population is, in the case of the Orient, indirect, impersonal and temporary, while in the case of the knights it bears a direct, personal, concrete, and permanent character.

The difference in the two groups of officials, therefore, does not lie in their economic positions, but in the significance of their day-to-day functions. This is conditioned in a far-reaching way by the international situation, in which a given Oriental complex exists. If the complex in question is surrounded by powerful states, then the external military functions are of first importance beside the internal political repressive and economic tasks (police, justice, public works). The civil bureaucracy does not disappear. This would be impossible, since it forms an integrating part of the social organism. But in its activity in some circumstances it will not only be supplemented but even overshadowed by the functions of the military bureaucracy, in the event that the latter must fulfill protective tasks of great importance and duration. In Assyria this was apparently almost always the case, while at the same time the typically "Oriental" features (waterworks, administration, etc.) were relatively limited. In India several great waterworks-complexes were centered around a number of isolated river-systems, so that the antagonistic political conditions and the corresponding large-scale military tasks always arose anew. A complete victory of the military or secular elements, which found a potent weapon in Buddha's anti-Brahman teaching, thus became impossible. Even in the realm of Asoka, Buddhism, which had reached the height of its power, could still not fully displace the ideas of the Brahman priestly caste. Finally Buddhism was completely defeated, and an interesting balance of power between the priesthood and the warrior caste, the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas, came about—a social balance which the functional duality between the two upper groups of the Indian Oriental upper class plainly expressed.

China's social structure accommodates itself without difficulty to the principles we have indicated. A variant of situation A 1 a 1 (too much summer-water in the periodically rising loess-rivers, insufficient rain at the right time) enforced the adoption of local irrigation, but above all water-control measures on the grand scale. In the time of Confucius (about 500 B.C.) the management of waterworks had already taken on the character of a long-perfected, legendarily revealed, heroic accomplishment.

The first epoch of unified empire (221 B.C. to 220 A.D.) left many military tasks undone. It established the civil element and its particular ideology, Confucianism, in a solid and programmatic manner. Only Central and South China were actually not assimilated. The push into the southern areas disrupted the temporarily unified state order. In the Period of Disruption (221-589) we find military accomplishments again attaining high social prestige. The T'ang era (618-906) mourned the decline of the knightly customs. What had happened? After the building of the Grand Canal under the Sui dynasty (589-618), which, by means of an artificial Nile, combined China's two great stream-valleys in an economic-political unity, after the establishment of the examination system, after the reorganization of all-important branches of political life, the civilian element ruled supreme in the reunified country. The literary Oriental officialdom (and Confucianism) pushed the warrior officials (and Buddhism) into the background. Conqueror nations such as the Mongols and the Manchus were able to proclaim once more temporarily the supremacy of the military virtues. In vain. The world "within the four oceans," Greater China, had grown together into a rather loose but dynamic unity. Even in the shadow of the conqueror peoples the Chinese representatives of Oriental bureaucracy, the Confucian officials, occupied the supreme positions in the Chinese hierarchy of social prestige.

4. *Agrarian and State Crises in Oriental Society* In a simple Oriental society agrarian crises are mainly the result of too much or too little water. Large-scale catastrophes of flood or drought, endangering the physical existence of great populated regions, drive the victims of flood and hunger to mass emigration and uproar. The crisis in such a case still bears an immediate natural character. At this stage the subjective factor of a good or bad government—maintenance or disrepair of the waterworks—plays an especially great role for the economy of the country.

The mechanism of crisis becomes very involved if Oriental society with its productive powers develops its property-based conflicts. This can occur essentially in two ways, according to the two basic forms of the developed Oriental society. The agricultural production may be closely concentrated about the life-giving irrigation system; or this system may bear a loose, uneven, dispersed character. The second type is

very clearly represented by China, which in this sense may serve as an example of a specific variant of Oriental society (as its B-form). Inner crises occur in both cases, but in case B they take on especially violent forms.

The development of productive powers allows generally an extension of the basic complex over a larger region. With the extension of the dominant economic area, the ruling bureaucracy grows in number and function. In case the original area retains its political superiority, it can successfully prevent the growth of outside rival groups. In Pharaonic Egypt the merchant class is insignificant. India's trade develops more strongly than the Egyptian, but even here the bureaucratic central-power blocks each threatening development of the merchants and money-lenders. The weakening results accordingly, not from the outside, but from an internal conflict of the ruling bureaucracy itself.

The origin of the internal conflict can be of two kinds. The machinery of the state may more or less effectively prevent the steady acquisition of peasant lands by centrifugal elements of the bureaucracy; but, since the means of communication often are imperfectly developed, it cannot prevent—in consequence of the great territorial extension of the developed Oriental state—the relative independence of its territorial organs (satraps, governors, tax-controllers, and district officials). With the increasing appropriation of the locally collected land tax by the local bureaucracy, the power of the local officialdom increases. The consequence is either a shrinkage in income of the central power or, if this income remains constant, an intensified oppression of the peasant masses, from which the additional local appropriations must be extracted by added local pressure. In the first case, the possibility of financing public works is materially damaged. In the second case the excessive abuse of the peasantry by the “grinding bureaucracy”—excessive from the standpoint of the traditional average—strikes vitally at the personal foundation of the public works. In both cases with the weakening of public works the productivity of agriculture shrinks and thereby the very foundation of political power within the state in question. The tendency towards disorder and uprising grows. In case the neighboring nomadic societies have then reached a point of relative concentration and high aggressive striking power, the decadent irrigation state can be easily overrun by nomadic conquerors. If the outside cause is lacking, then the cataclysm follows as soon as the internal disintegration is far enough advanced. Either way, however, it is an inner crisis-mechanism which loosens up the Oriental social structure and prepares it for civil war or for defeat from the outside.

A variation of the just-described cases is the concentration of land in the hands of individual members of the ruling bureaucracy, who exert excessive military, priestly, or administrative power. The temple may get

much land and pay little or no taxes. High local officials acquire land as special gifts or as regular pay, and this assignment, considered as temporary, may develop into a permanent possession in consequence of economic-political conditions. As the income of the central power weakens, it is unable to fulfill its specific Oriental task in the process of agricultural production. At the end of the Old Kingdom in Egypt, before the invasion of the Hyksos, before the ascent of the Ammon priesthood, and before the coming of Alexander the Great, the central power seems to have been weakened in this fashion.

These cases show a great many varieties, but they all belong to the same basic type. Every time the crisis develops out of the conflicts of Oriental bureaucracy, which permits beside itself either no or only peripheral economic elements. The B-Type, China, in consequence of the essentially looser form of the basic irrigation system, has prepared a favorable soil not only for the training of centrifugal elements in the ruling bureaucracy but also for the growth of influential non-bureaucratic elements. A higher mobilization of land ownership was technically possible, was economically desirable from the standpoint of the taxlevying bureaucracy, and was therefore officially established. The function of a commercial bourgeoisie could only be exercised partially and imperfectly by the state bureaucracy. The cycle therefore had to assume a particularly complicated form.

The "public sector" (formed by the free peasants) at the beginning of a new epoch surpasses the "private sector" (great landholders and tenants), since the collapse of the old regime destroyed countless peasants and many landlords and laid waste large stretches of farming land. A farm policy which distributes land, seed, and tools and which keeps taxes low brings the landless elements back to the villages. The peasantry grows. The crop grows. The taxes grow. The power of the state grows, which increases its initial efforts to build canals and dykes. However, the upswing carries within it the seed of its own downfall. With the growing well-being of the villages and the state, the profit of the merchants and the income of the officials also grow. The accumulated liquid capital tends to change into an immobile form, into land. The private sector expands and therewith that portion of the peasantry which is fully taxed. The active or retired landowning officials and the mighty merchant landlords pay little tax. With growing extension of the private sector the public income decreases. The effectiveness of the state to carry out its economic functions is decreased. It gives less to the farmers but takes more from them. Taxes rise and with them—*circulus vitiosus*—the tendency of the free farmers to flee from the open into the private sector, i.e., to transfer their land to a private landowner (possibly also a monastery) and in this way to escape from the tax-collector. At the same time with the decay of the waterworks, the pressure rises even in the private

sector. Peasant uprisings, initially local, take on larger dimensions. The internally weakened regime, whose centrifugal elements form a destructive block of interests with the merchant landowners and eventually even simple landowners, becomes ever less secure in its power, more cynical in its morals, more cruel in its taxation. An uprising, led by uncompromising elements of the old upper class, or a nomadic invasion, or a combination of both, accomplishes what the weakness of the economic sphere has thoroughly prepared: the fall of the dynasty, on whose ruins the leader of the victorious movement newly establishes himself with a reform program, as the absolute chief of a rejuvenated, though basically unaltered, Oriental despotism.

5. *Why No Independent Development Towards Industrial Capitalism?* The discovery of a crisis-mechanism, which runs in the form of a vicious circle, involves another principle which shows only a particular side of the same process: the agrarian and political crises moved in a vicious circle and not in a steadily increasing spiral. The social-economic system reproduces itself instead of developing. Why?

The Orient has applied a specific type of nature- and culture-conditioned productive power (irrigation-water, facilities for irrigation, intensive manual labor) which played little or no rôle in the agriculture of the West. Thus in the Oriental zone a higher productivity of agricultural work is reached than in the West. This result is based on public works of great magnitude. While in the West managerial and intellectual centers of agrarian order were not needed, in the Orient they become a *conditio sine qua non* for the simple reproduction of the agricultural life. The political center in the Orient becomes economically more important and politically more powerful because—in contrast to the feudal world—in one way or another it has a direct bearing on the activities of the peasants. The Oriental state and its representatives thus arrogate to themselves the bulk of the land revenue, whereas Western (and Japanese) absolutism conceded a great part of the land rent to the feudal lords.

In the West the transition to capitalism occurred in cities, which knew how to make themselves independent by a chain of more or less political aggressive movements. The surplus from handicraft and commercial activity remained in the hands of the bourgeois class, under whose control it grew. The accumulation of capital was thus possible politically as well as economically; the surplus was not taxed away, confiscated, or taken away as a pseudo-loan. The industrial productive powers could be developed as well, without negatively touching the agricultural hinterland, in whose urban centers the new development took place; and the absolute central power had to encourage industrial progress all the more eagerly, since here, in contrast to the feudally-controlled villages, it expected additional income and power for the court and its administration.

Quite different in the "Orient." The city centers here dominated the economic reproduction either of decisive parts or of the whole agricultural life. Anyone who, for the purpose of gaining bourgeois freedom, drove the central power from the cities, upset the nerve centers of the agricultural hinterland. Obviously then, the position of the Oriental administrative city is a different one, not only in the sense of the immediate production techniques. It is so likewise in regard to the distribution of surplus products. Occupying the social-economic center and either destroying or decisively limiting the existence of feudal revenue-getters, Oriental absolutism gains supreme power also over the city's production. The wretched artisans of the Orient and the proud and independent artisans of the West are the product of different developments, in the course of which one side is kept at a bare minimum by taxes, etc., while the other side learns to defend its interests in powerful guild cities.

The development of Western industrial capitalism accordingly occurred because there a peculiarly decentralized structure of the agricultural productive power permitted—economically, sociologically and politically—the commencement of capital-accumulation, while the centralized structure of the highly productive Oriental agrarian order worked in the opposite direction, namely towards the reproduction of the existing order, towards its stagnation.

Despite any cyclic collapses, Asiatic society, insofar as it was not physically destroyed from outside, could therefore re-establish itself in principle after the worst disaster. The classical type of a society which tenaciously reproduces itself, a stationary society, is created.

# ECONOMIC ANTHROPOLOGY

ECONOMICS IS THE STUDY of the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. In the previous edition, the subject was treated through inclusion of an article describing the technological basis of one particular society, another describing the theory relating cultural evolution to the development of efficient uses of energy sources, and two articles taking different views of the process of economizing in non-industrial societies. With great regret the editor removed the first two articles, mainly because of space limitations. Douglas L. Oliver's description of the technological basis of the culture of the Siuai of Bougainville Island, found in his *A Solomon Island Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955, pp. 11-35), is a particularly fine example of this important anthropological genre; hopefully, students will continue to seek it out and read it. As for the energy theory of cultural evolution, it remains as important as ever, and continues to be closely associated with the name of Leslie A. White, whose general positions are so familiar to readers of these two volumes.

But these *Readings* are also responsive to the most contemporary tides in the interests of the general body of anthropologists. One of the most important of these currents has to do with the impressive growth of interest in economic anthropology narrowly defined as the comparative analysis of systems of exchange. In part because of the nature of economics as a discrete academic discipline, it has been possible for anthropologists



to make significant contributions to our knowledge of economics per se. This is attributable to the overriding concern within the formal discipline of economics for macro-studies and econometric model construction. Anthropologists, then, contribute studies of microeconomic systems. They describe concrete exchange systems, markets, productive regimes and tend to generate models of the economy on lower abstractive levels than do professional economists. The main area in which the two kinds of specialists meet is in what is sometimes called "development economics."

The present selection of articles merely broaches some of the central theoretical problems of the currently most significant arena of anthropological interest in economics. Elsewhere in this volume, however, are other selections with additional interests such as Andrew P. Vayda's article (II:11) which places economics in a broad ecological frame, and Charles Erasmus' article (II:34) which raises highly specific problems of directed economic change in modernizing societies.

As will quickly be apparent, the area of economic anthropology is a highly controversial one. Light and heat are closely connected as these selections will show. At least the editor hopes they are connected: there is certainly plenty of heat; surely there must be some light.



## 13 Before the Machine

Melville J. Herskovits

MELVILLE HERSKOVITS WAS AMONG THOSE WHO CONTESTED EVOLUTIONISM AS applied to culture because of its deterministic implications. Concluding that such concepts as "primitive" or "preliterate" reflect invidious distinctions based on ethnocentric attitudes, he preferred to restrict cultural contrasts to specific features rather than making blanket statements about levels of development or complexity.

In line with this attitude, the author of this selection recognizes differences in economic organization between, he says, machine and non-machine cultures. But the differences are invariably quantitative rather than qualitative; in other words, the fundamental institutions of modern economy are perceptible, if embryonic, in nonliterate cultures.

### 1

Though man has inhabited the earth for more than half a million years, the invention of the steam engine, which introduced the machine

SOURCE: *Economic Anthropology* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), pp. 25-41. Reprinted by permission of the author and publisher.

Melville J. Herskovits (1895-1963) was Professor of Anthropology at Northwestern University where he was a pioneer in introducing studies of African culture in the United States. Usually accompanied into the field by his wife, who shared in his research, Herskovits worked in the southern United States, in Africa, in South America, and in the Caribbean. His was also an active role in the theoretical controversy of the discipline. He was the author of *Dahomey* (1938), *The Myth of the Negro Past* (1941), and *Cultural Anthropology* (1955). Among his posthumous works are *The New World Negro* (1966) and, with Marshall Segall and Donald Campbell, *The Influence of Culture on Visual Perception* (1966).

age, occurred less than two hundred years ago. In this mere instant, as the life of the human race is counted, the machine has come to hold a place of such importance in present-day America and Europe that it is not easy for us to imagine a machineless existence.

Yet for much of mankind the machine holds little significance. Even in America and in Europe, where the influence of a mechanized technology invades all phases of life, quiet backwaters still exist where farming folk or village communities live lives relatively little touched by the machine. More important are the untold millions who today follow patterns of life almost entirely different from those by which we order our lives and who, in the Americas, the South Seas, Australia, Asia, and Africa meet their needs without the use of any of those complex mechanical aids we hold essential.

The term "primitive" has been applied to most of these folk. Because with but few exceptions, they have developed no written language, the word thus became synonymous with "nonhistoric" or "nonliterate." These terms, however, are actually to be preferred because they do not carry the connotations of inferiority, simplicity, and lack of sophistication that have come to cluster about the word "primitive," and thus to obscure its meaning. Such large differences are, indeed, to be found among nonliterate societies that to characterize them in any general manner is exceedingly difficult. Every institution shows a tremendously wide range of variation in its "primitive" manifestations. It has therefore become a truism that there is no generic difference between "primitive" societies and literate ones, but that, the world over, all cultures represent specialized local developments which have come into being as a result of the unique historical developments that, as was pointed out in the preceding chapter, mark the past of each of them.

This being the case, we may find it worth while to sketch the characteristics of the nonliterate societies that justify us in marking them off for special study. We will, in particular, consider those traits that will occupy us in contrasting and comparing their economics with those of the literate, machine cultures.

At the outset, we are struck by the differences in population size between "primitive" and literate groups. This is true not only where density is concerned, but in the numbers of those who make up the self-conscious social entities which we variously designate as "band" or "tribe" or "kingdom." Another difference between nonliterate and literate folk lies in the respective degree of contact they have with the outside world. In supplying their wants, what the nonliterate tribesman could obtain "was usually near at hand," as it has been put. On the other hand, "the whole world . . . contributes to our needs. A complicated business organization makes this possible, one that stands out in marked contrast to the simple system" of these folk. Even in pre-machine days

in Europe, or in the non-machine but literate cultures of Asia, the range of communication and the consequent breadth of horizon of these peoples were and are in general greater than those of an African or a North American Indian tribe, or even, for all their voyaging, of the inhabitants of the Polynesian islands. Literate societies, as we have seen, also manifest a greater degree of specialization of labor, a greater emphasis on the market and on a standard medium of exchange—money—as an expression of value to facilitate market operations, and a resultant greater economic complexity than do nonliterate communities.

The machine, however, most highly developed in the cultures of North America and Europe, has been the outstanding factor in accentuating all those characteristics of an economic order that have been mentioned as distinguishing the lives of literate from nonliterate peoples. The implications of the machine for human society are therefore greatest in these cultures, and it is between these machine cultures and all others, especially the nonliterate ones, that the differences are widest. That is why, at the outset, the role of the machine must be emphasized as a factor in differentiating their life from ours.

## 2

In considering the influence of the machine in our lives, we must constantly bear in mind the effect the technological perfections that have gone with its development, the greater degree of productivity these have permitted, and the changes they have wrought in the economic sphere have had on some of the more important currents of thought of our day. Especially important is the fact that the achievements of the machine are objectively demonstrable, from which it follows that technological and economic gains can most readily be used when evaluating different cultures. The mechanistic philosophy of our day, when raised in the field of method to a tradition of objective observation, is readily contrasted with the mystical elements in the technology and economic order of nonliterate societies.

This is one of the principal reasons why the identification of the word "primitive" with the concept "lower" as regards social development—or its converse, the use of "civilized" in the sense of something "higher"—has been so convincing and, as expressed in the term "progress," has come to lodge so deeply in our everyday manner of thought. Here is the apparent documentation of the ethnocentrism that makes the appreciation of the values of other cultures than our own so difficult. Descriptions of our technological achievement and the multiple interrelations of our economic organization can seemingly be employed to demonstrate the more complex nature of our culture as compared with the cultures of all other peoples, especially of nonliterate folk. That such

a demonstration has had so great an appeal and has been so difficult to dislodge from the popular mind is not strange. It was such an assumption that gave the attempts to establish an evolutionary sequence for human civilizations their greatest psychological force. For from this point of view—but this point of view only—the Australians could be regarded beyond question as a simpler people than the Africans; or the Africans could be demonstrably shown to be on a lower level of culture than the great aggregates that peopled Central America, Mexico, and Peru at the time of the discovery of America; or these latter, in turn, could without fear of contradiction be held less highly developed than ourselves.

In the same way, the concept of progress, so deeply rooted in our habits of thought, has derived its most important sanctions from demonstrations in the field of technology and economics. That a man, working with a machine, can produce more in given units of time with a given expenditure of energy than when working by hand, is not difficult to prove. It is not so easy, however, to show that one set of religious beliefs is more adequate than another, or one type of family organization more effective than the next. Here the validation of judgment must derive from assumptions that lie quite outside objective proof. Even in the economic and technological spheres the argument couched in terms of relative powers of productivity is by no means self-evident when the ultimate ends toward which such activities are directed—as against the values that guide day-to-day living—come to be analyzed. In all societies, that is, the technological and economic order must at least be efficient enough to permit survival. Granting this, we know enough about the psychology of culture to understand that the satisfaction of human wants is by no means dependent upon an abundance of goods. Increased efficiency in production is likewise not necessarily accompanied by a corresponding efficiency in achieving an effective distribution of what the technological system is capable of producing.

It is not alone in evaluating societies as a whole that the machine has shaped our thought. Certain concepts respecting the psychology of non-literate peoples have been influenced by that phase of our culture which is to be broadly included under the term “science.” The scientific tradition, and the nature of the problems with which scientists deal, require that every effort be made to reason from cause to effect, to work under conditions of rigid control, eliminating extraneous factors that might influence the result of any given experiment. It is not generally understood, however, that this technique, which marks scientific thinking, is by no means characteristic of the reasoning of most persons in our society, nor even of scientists in their everyday life. Yet despite this, these particular modes of thought have given rise to a concept which maintains that our ways of thinking differ from those of “primitive” peoples, who are held to be prelogical. Without a tradition of reasoning from cause to

effect, they are held to be enmeshed in a body of "collective representations," in which the mechanical relationship between effectuating forces and their objective results is lost in a maze of mystic associations. Life is thus lived in a world where reality, as we know it, constitutes but a portion of valid experience.

We need here do no more than enter a demurrer to this position, for many refutations of it have been written out of the first-hand experience of those who have studied nonliterate societies. The significant thing for us is to realize how a mode of thought, closely associated with the basic technological process of our culture, can be rationalized as a habit of thinking presumably followed by all those who live in this machine society, as against the habits of all who do not.

Another instance of how pervasive the indirect influence of the machine has been may be introduced here, though some of its implications for our subject will be treated at length in later pages. This concerns the theory of economic determinism. The increased productivity of our technology and the accompanying complexity of economic organization has resulted in a corresponding increase in the interdependence of individuals and communities. But it was just when the industrial revolution was at its height, and the economic problems presented by it had attained an order of difficulty perhaps never before experienced, that this theory in its present form, was developed. It seems, therefore, that there might well be a discernible relationship between a point of view that holds economic phenomena to be basic in shaping other aspects of life and the historical setting of the period during which this concept was developed.

There can be little doubt that economic factors do play an important role in influencing non-economic aspects of culture; but this merely recognizes the fact that all phases of life are closely interrelated and, because of this, tend to modify each other. In these terms, ours is by no means the only culture where economic factors are preponderant in influencing the other facets of culture. Yet it does remain an historic fact that it was only among a people—ourselves—whose economy had become more complex than any before experienced by man, and at a time when the problems presented by the economic order were becoming most serious, that this theory made its appearance.

We must, then, be on our guard against a position that fails to take due account of modes of life other than our own, or which disregards directive forces other than those that to us appear to be of the first magnitude. Above all, we must guard against thinking of all the cultures of nonliterate peoples as one undifferentiated mass, to be contrasted with our own particular body of traditions. These reservations must be kept in mind in recognizing that the machine has made it possible for us to live in an order of society which, in its economic aspects, is to be set

apart from all others because of its complexity. Only with these reservations can we achieve a workable basis for the analysis of the problems to be considered in this book. We may, therefore, in these terms, proceed to sketch the more outstanding of these distinctions. For though, in most instances, they will be found to comprise differences of degree rather than of kind, we must analyze them so that we will not lose sight of them as we later describe and seek to understand the economic processes employed by nonliterate communities.

## 3

The relationship between the machine technology and the pecuniary organization of our economy has by no means been made clear. Yet it is apparent that this relationship has given rise to certain special kinds of economic phenomena, such as the business cycle, and the periodic unemployment that has followed on technological advances. These phenomena are the direct result of the increased productivity of the machine, coupled with a system whereby the sale of goods for profit as a technique for amassing wealth has become an end rather than a means of life. This entire complex operates so as to deprive many persons of an opportunity to obtain the basic necessities of living, no matter how willing they may be to work or how able.

Such conditions are unknown to nonliterate man. These smaller groups may live on a level but little removed from subsistence needs, where the margin between starvation and survival is slight. Yet even in such societies, the individual who, as an individual, is reduced to such straits that he must either depend on some agency set up for the purpose of preventing his giving way before the harsh dicta of the economic system, or starve, is rarely, if ever, encountered. In societies existing on the subsistence margin, rather, it is generally the rule that when there is not enough, all hunger alike; when there is plenty, all participate.

This does not mean that in cultures where the margin of available goods is greater than in those existing on such a low economic plane, an equal distribution of available resources exist. Practically all societies where life is lived on more than a subsistence level know the concepts of rich and poor, of leader and follower. But even in societies with relatively complex economies, such as those of West Africa and Melanesia, where buying to sell at a profit is of some importance and the hiring of labor is not unknown, the phenomena of the business cycle, of technological unemployment, and of malnutrition resulting from an inability to obtain the necessities of life are not found. Thus, for example, clan solidarity among the East African Baganda assured that "real poverty did not exist"; furthermore, "no one ever went hungry . . . because everyone was welcome to go and sit down and share a meal with his equals."

Again, the labor market, though by no means entirely absent among nonliterate groups, never attains a place comparable to that which it holds in our own economic order.

Among nonliterate folk we encounter conditions in many respects analogous to the economic system of the Middle Ages and before. As in pre-machine-age Europe, the laborer is almost invariably the owner of the means of production and to that extent is the master of his own economic destiny. That is, capitalism, as we have come to know it since the advent of power machinery, is foreign to non-machine economies. Capital goods may be concentrated in the hands of individual members of certain communities of this type, but this merely signifies that the difference between these systems and our machine economy is one of degree rather than of kind. In nonliterate societies, we do find men who control the labor of others, whether completely, as under the institution of slavery, or for limited periods of time, under forms of employment for wages. We can even encounter, in Samoa, something akin to an organized body of workers who do not hesitate to interrupt their labor where this is necessary to enforce their demands, or even to indulge in sabotage. But the demands to be enforced are demands of prestige and not of livelihood, for among these workers there is no one to whom the return for his labor is essential to his existence.

Another outstanding difference between machine and non-machine cultures is found in their degree of specialization. In the latter, as has been noted, almost every person controls all the techniques essential for his own support and for the support of those dependent upon him. Even the man who excels in building a canoe, or hunting game, or weaving, or iron-working will, with the aid of members of his family, also carry on agriculture or tend the herds, and he can, when necessary, build a house and fashion household utensils, or make the clothing that habitat and tradition dictate as necessities. Similarly, though some women may be better potters than others, or may excel in basketry or in some other occupation, yet all women will know how to do the household tasks and other kinds of work that are allotted to women under the prevalent patterns of labor. Conversely, it is rare, even where individuals surpass in certain skills, that these skills are restricted to them alone.

Thus, among the Ifugao of the Philippines,

Division of labor is not carried further than a mere beginning. Some men are highly skilled blacksmiths. Nearly all know something about blacksmithing. Some are highly skilled wood carvers, but nearly all are wood carvers for all that. Almost the only division of labor is between men and women.

In Samoa,

The division of labor which is of importance to the mere physical well being of the people is the division of labor along sex lines. Every man knows how to



build a small house, how to hew out a rough canoe, how to make a coconut cup, or carve a rough food bowl. The carpenters and makers of sennit lashings are essentially specialists, called in for important occasions. But upon the balance of men and women workers within the household, and upon their skill in the usual tasks in which every adult is supposed to be proficient, depends the prosperity of the household.

Among the Hopi of Arizona,

Common wants and desires, fairly standardized, simple and easily satisfied, require no diverse specialization to satisfy them. . . . It is evident that division of labor is primarily conventional, based on sex secondarily and more indefinitely on age.

In Haiti,

The life of the Haitian farmer, though hard, is simple and self-contained. With but few exceptions, he supplies all his necessities, for he commands almost the entire range of techniques known to his culture; hence Haitian economy shows a lack of specialization that in the main is only relieved by the sex division of labor.

The Maori, we learn, employed

. . . no very intricate division of labour, such as occurs in the highly complex social structure of the "civilized" community. The fairly simple character of economic wants did not necessitate any great diversity of occupations to satisfy them, and every man was able to master something more than the rudiments of the principal crafts. Entire absorption of the working powers of the individual in one industry, or in a single process of an industry, was rare, if not unknown. At the same time division of labour on a limited scale, both as regards separation of employments and of processes, was not absent.

Or, in Dahomey, a non-machine economy outstanding for its complexity, and where craft specialization is marked, "no matter what the rank of a Dahomean or what his trade, he must know how to cultivate the soil, and he will have his fields."

We must recognize that all men and women in non-machine societies can control the techniques essential for obtaining a living, and, where there are specialized crafts, that the craftsmen are never dependent for their livelihood solely upon what they produce. These are sufficiently striking differences between nonliterate economies and our own. Even more striking, however, are the implications of the fact that among non-literate peoples the extreme forms of specialization known to us, where the worker must restrict his activities to minor operations in the entire production process, is but rarely encountered. Specialization within one industry does occur in non-machine societies, as where an individual will be expert at making one special part of a canoe. But, again, almost with-

out exception, such a worker is found to be a full-fledged member of a larger co-operative work group, and psychologically has no difficulty in identifying himself with the finished product.

The subject of industrial psychology is important in making effective the human resources needed for the kind of mass production that has been developed in our society, since the degree of specialization characteristic of the organization of our larger industries has given rise to serious problems of individual adjustment. A man who for hours on end tightens a bolt on the engine of an automobile which he will probably never see, and with which he can in no way identify himself, or who, in a packing house, makes the same cut on each of an endless procession of carcasses as they pass before him, is deprived of something that is deeply rooted in the human psyche.

It is not necessary to do more than indicate this to cause us to see why questions of this sort have been found so urgent a subject for study. Veblen put it as follows:

The share of the operative workman in the machine industry is (typically) that of an attendant, an assistant, whose duty is to keep pace with the machine process and to help out with workmanlike manipulation at points where the machine engaged is incomplete. His work supplements the machine process, rather than makes use of it. On the contrary the machine process makes use of the workman.

In the unconscious processes of identification an infinite satisfaction is achieved if, at the end of a day or a week or a year, a worker can point to something of which he may be proud, of which he is the maker or in the making of which he has participated, and in which he retains a sense of creativeness. But this is precisely what cannot be achieved by the majority of those employed in the specialized occupations of an industrial society.

Sapir, in developing his idea of "what kind of a good thing culture is," felt that this factor of specialization was so important that it could be used as a criterion to divide cultures into those which are "genuine" and those which are "spurious":

The great cultural fallacy of industrialism, as developed up to the present time, is that in harnessing machines to our uses it has not known how to avoid the harnessing of the majority of mankind to its machines. The telephone girl who lends her capacities, during the greater part of the living day, to the manipulation of a technical routine that has an eventually high efficiency value but that answers to no spiritual needs of her own is an appalling sacrifice to civilization. . . . The American Indian who solves the economic problem with salmon-spear and rabbit-snare operates on a relatively low level . . . , but he represents an incomparably higher solution than our telephone girl of the questions that culture has to ask of economics.

We need not set up a system of comparative values in modes of living, however, to recognize that in terms of achieving a rounded life, the patterns of production in non-machine societies afford far more satisfactions to one engaged in the industrial process than in a machine society. No more apt illustration of this point could be had than in the following description of the manner of work of the Andamanese and of the drives that underlie their efforts:

In the manufacture of their weapons, utensils, and other articles, they . . . spend . . . hour after hour in laboriously striking pieces of iron with a stone hammer for the purpose of forming spear or arrowheads, or in improving the shape of a bow, etc., even though there be no necessity, immediate or prospective, to stimulate them to such efforts. The incentive is evidently a spirit of emulation, each one priding himself on being able to produce work which will excel, or at least compare not unfavourably with, that of his neighbors.

This may likewise be seen in the choices of occupation made by certain native peoples who are in contact with the world economic system. Thus, of the Malay fishermen of Kelantan, it is stated:

Popular opinion is apt to regard the Malay, in contrast to the Indian and Chinese who share his native land, as lazy, improvident, and lacking in foresight or ability to work hard and to save. . . . Because a Malay refuses to do long and monotonous work on rubber plantations away from his family, under conditions which Chinese and Indians willingly accept for the sake of the wages, it is assumed that he is lazy. No one who has seen the long, often cold, exhausting and disappointing labour of fishermen on the east coast would doubt that the Malay is capable of sustained, skilful and energetic labour. But he needs to have interest in his work, a factor which modern industrial organization has subjugated to the desire for a higher standard of living.

Certainly the resources an individual in a non-machine society brings to his task must be greater and more varied, in terms of productive activity, than when he carries on the intense specialization demanded of him in a machine technology. What in the field of art has been termed the drive toward virtuosity can be given full play where every step in a process is in the hands of the producer, from the gathering of the raw materials to the finished product that may be admired by the worker's fellows.

Yet another distinction between machine and non-machine societies lies in the development of the tradition of business enterprise, as we know it. As will be shown in later pages, practically no present-day human group is entirely self-supporting, and there is good reason to believe that trade existed in quite early prehistoric times. Where tribal specialization has followed on the localization of natural resources, the needs of a people for those goods they cannot produce because of a lack of es-

sential raw materials cause them to trade for what they desire, and much of their own productive activity is devoted to the making of their own specialty for this same market. A comparable phenomenon is found within certain tribal economies, as where the makers of iron objects, to the degree that they devote their time to this work, must exchange their products for such food, utensils, or non-utilitarian objects as they need or desire if they are to have them. In a number of nonliterate societies where trading is a recognized occupation, and where, as in West Africa, trade is carried on by the use of money rather than by barter, buying in order to sell at a profit, or manufacture of goods primarily for disposal in the market, is well known. We shall also encounter cultures in Melanesia, in East Africa, and in North and South America where the trader as middleman plays an important part in the circulation of commodities from tribe to tribe. But the role which these aspects of trade play in the economic life of such peoples does not have an importance comparable in any way to that held by business in our own economy.

Though in non-industrial societies sparring between traders for advantage does, of course, mark their operations, sometimes even this seems to be absent where values in terms of goods exchanged by direct barter are fixed by traditional usage. Nonetheless, among nonliterate groups the conduct of business transactions has nothing of the impersonal quality that has come to be an outstanding characteristic of our economic system. It is well known that where a non-European has to deal with a European in a matter involving trade, both parties to the transaction are often subject to no little irritation because of differing traditions of trading. Among many who live in non-machine societies, sparring for advantage in the exchange of goods is something of a pleasurable contest of wits.

Nonliterate societies also differ from our own in the relative stress they lay on pecuniary standards of evaluation. Among ourselves, these standards assume such importance that values in terms of money not only dictate our economic judgments, but tend to invade evaluations of all other phases of our culture as well. This has brought it about that money, by and of itself, has come to have a place quite aside from its function as the least common denominator of the market-place. As a matter of fact, it is not easy for us to think of ends that are not expressed as monetary values, even though they concern art or religion or family relations. That we use phrases such as "to have a heart of gold," or to "give a gilt-edged promise," means only that our linguistic usage, like that of all peoples, reflects our standard of values—not as this standard may operate in an economic sense, but as the phrase is applied to moral and personal judgments of the broadest sort.

Now this kind of evaluation is a rarity in nonliterate societies. It is

found, notably in Melanesia and in northwestern North America, where outward emblems of wealth are psychologically as important as among ourselves. Yet, in general, there are many more of these groupings where goods, to say nothing of people, are not to be bought at a price, than where the opposite is true. Many instances have been recorded where objects desired by a purchaser have been refused him in the face of fabulous offers—fabulous, that is, in terms of the values set by the people among whom the owner of the desired object lived. It is more revealing of our own psychology than that of those against whom the charge of economic irresponsibility has been laid that the basis of this charge, so often repeated in the accounts of contacts between natives and Europeans, is that these peoples are prone to accept trifles, such as beads, in recompense for objects which we hold to have the highest value, such as golden ornaments or precious stones. In reality, this merely means that in such cases the standard of value brought into play differ from our own.

One of the most widely spread traits of human beings, manifest under the most diverse types of social order, is the desire for prestige. As we shall see, there is an intimate relationship between prestige and the control of economic resources in most societies living above a subsistence level. The degree to which those who live under the regime of the machine are dependent upon others for almost every necessity of life, whether material or psychological, and the extent to which it has become necessary to translate experience into terms of those monetary units on which we are so dependent for the goods and services we find essential or desirable, demonstrate the economic consequence of extreme specialization. Here we see money assuming an importance out of all proportion to its manifestation in other cultures or at other times.

It is a commonplace that Europe of the Middle Ages stressed other-worldliness in evaluating its satisfactions and directives. This, however, is merely one way of recalling to ourselves that prestige and the resultant power associated with it can and, in most societies, is to be gained through excellence in other fields than the accumulation of wealth, that the rewards for outstanding accomplishment can be conceived in terms other than those of money.

All caution must understandably be exercised in making statements such as these. In some nonliterate groups, especially where a money economy prevails, motivations quite similar to those found in any community living under a machine technology are not lacking. On the other hand, we must not forget that many persons in our culture are not dominated by the pecuniary ideal to anything like the extent of the majority. However, granting the existence of exceptions both in nonliterate societies and our own, the broad differences in the patterned attitudes toward money in machine and non-machine cultures must be recognized.

## 4

A final distinction between machine and non-machine societies has to do with the utilization of economic resources for the support of non-subsistence activities. Because of greater powers of production, the goods available under a machine technology to release man-power from direct concern with the tasks of producing the necessities of life are more numerous among ourselves than in any other society. The conversion of these resources into what is to be termed social leisure is of the highest importance for the understanding of many aspects of the organization of human societies, wherever they are found and whatever their complexity. As such, this point will be given extended treatment in a later chapter. Here we will consider only that phase of the development of a mechanistic approach to life that accompanied the advent and growth of a machine technology, which finds its most characteristic expression in the scientific tradition.

From the beginning of the industrial revolution, the amount of economic resources devoted to the support of the scientific investigation of the world in which we live has become ever larger. This in turn has so helped to increase the efficiency of the processes of production that much more consumption and capital goods have been available than ever before. But the relationship is a reciprocal one, which has released an ever increasing measure of social leisure; and this, in turn, has permitted the investigation of a constantly wider range of problems.

Science, of course, did not begin with the machine age, as is apparent when we consider the history of physics and mathematics. Medicine, one of the scientific disciplines that has most flowered in our culture, also has a history that long antedates the coming of the machine. Those whose task it is to care for human life and assuage human suffering, whether as practitioners of scientific medicine or as magic healers, are in all societies held to be worthy of support out of the subsistence goods produced by those who are always potentially, at least, in need of them. As regards science in general, however, since there was more to consume, more social leisure has been available since the advent of the machine age to release scientists for the pursuit of their investigations. The increased efficiency of the productive processes that have resulted from the application of discoveries in the fields of the exact and mechanical sciences to industry is striking. In such matters as housing and all its related conveniences, or quantity and variety of foods, or aids to health and the prolongation of the life-span, or the wider recreational facilities and opportunities for a broader outlook on the world, the resources of machine societies are not to be compared with those where the technology does not permit an equivalent production of material goods.

There is no intention to suggest in what has just been set forth that the machine technology, by and of itself, causes the societies in which it develops to live under optimum conditions, any more than there is of indicating that the societies in which man lived or lives in what is sometimes termed a state of nature—in non-machine cultures, that is—represent a golden age.

What is meant is that the more admirable developments of science and the multiplication of resources, like those less desirable aspects of life under this same order of society, are concomitants of the machine as against other technologies. In non-machine cultures, life, though lived at a slower pace, must be lived with far more constant regard for the demands of the natural environment, and often in actual fear of not surviving. That is perhaps why the most convincing exposition of the values of our culture to native peoples is on the technological and scientific level; and this is also why we are so prone to insist that our way of life is the best.

One further point must be clarified before we proceed to an exposition of the data descriptive of the economic aspects of nonliterate societies with which we shall deal in succeeding chapters. The division of labor in the intellectual field has brought it about that students who investigate nonliterate cultures have had but little contact with those whose special concern is with the economic aspects of life; while those who study our economic organization have been so occupied with the problems of our complex industrial order that they do not customarily turn to other cultures for relevant materials against which to project their generalizations. For the problems with which we are concerned in this book, the implications of the fact that there is no established discipline of the kind envisaged by Gras under the term "economic anthropology" is crucial. Hence, in probing these implications, we shall profit by a clearer view of the usefulness of the materials with which we shall be dealing.



## 14 Anthropology and Economic Theory

Karl Polanyi

THE KINDS OF ASSUMPTIONS MADE IN THE PREVIOUS SELECTION LEAD INEVITABLY to attempts to apply modern economic theory to all cultures. Basically, it is assumed that value is determined by scarcity, and with various degrees of sophistication, use is made of the concepts of supply and demand, price, capital, and all of the other words which represent tools of economic inquiry.

Among economists, there was one whose denunciations of the application of modern economic theory to all economies in general attracted considerable attention among anthropologists. Arguing that modern economic theory is designed for the analysis of systems in which values are determined through market transactions, this economist contended that neither primitive cultures nor the societies of classical antiquity operated according to such a system. He suggested, instead, that there are three fundamental kinds of economic system, two in addition to the mar-

SOURCE: *Semantics of General Economic History (Revised)* (New York: Columbia University Research Project on "Origins of Economic Institutions," 1953). Reprinted by permission of the author.

Karl Polanyi (1886-1964) was a maverick economist who came to Columbia University as Adjunct Professor of Economics in the 1950's, ran a faculty seminar which attracted a remarkable group of graduate students many of whom were anthropologists. The paper here reprinted came from that University Seminar on Origins of Economic Institutions, which also gave rise to various other interesting things, including the book jointly edited by Polanyi, Conrad M. Arensberg, and Harry K. Pearson, *Trade and Market in the Early Empires* (1957). Karl Polanyi also wrote *The Great Transformation* (1944, now in paperback) and *Dahomey and the Slave Trade* (posthumous, 1966).



*ket type. Simplest of these is the reciprocal economy in which goods move from one person or group to another and back, each pair of participants constituting a complete and independent unit. The other is the redistributive economy which sees goods and services flow into a central store, then redistributed (though not necessarily in equivalent repayments to contributors so as to exhaust the central store). The content of this approach and its implications are given in the article below.*

### 1. *The Two Meanings of Economic*

The purpose of this paper is to determine the meaning that can be attached with consistency to the term 'economic' in the social sciences.

The need for an inquiry of this kind can hardly be in doubt. Naturally, the sphere of man's livelihood is not the concern of the discipline of economics alone. Embedded and enmeshed, as it is, in a variety of institutions, man's livelihood is the subject matter of the other social sciences as well, such as sociology, anthropology and, of course, economic history. None the less, up till recently it was taken for granted that the definition of that concept fell in the sole competency of the economist. True, the degree to which his analytical terms were relevant to other than market dominated economies—such as primitive economies, feudal economies or advanced socialist economies—was always held to be somewhat problematical. But only with the present recession of market institutions from their nineteenth century predominance has the limited character of economic analysis become apparent. The social sciences, as such, are now faced with the overdue task of constructing a frame of reference in regard to matters economic, which would no longer suffer from the limitations imposed by the traditional setting of economic science.

The simple recognition from which all such attempts must start is the fact that in referring to human activities the term economic is a compound of two meanings that have independent roots. We will call them the substantive and the formal meaning.

The substantive meaning of economic derives from man's dependence for his livelihood upon nature and his fellows. It refers to the interaction with his natural and social environment, insofar as this results in supplying him with the means of material want satisfaction.

The formal meaning of economic derives from the logical character of the means-ends relationship, as apparent in such words as 'economical' or 'economizing'. It refers to a definite situation of choice, namely, that between the different uses of means induced by an insufficiency of the means. If we call the rules governing choice of means the logic of rational action, then we may denote this variant of logic, with an improvised term, as formal economics.

The two root meanings of economic, the substantive and the formal,

have nothing in common. The latter derives from logic, the former from fact. The formal meaning implies a set of rules referring to choice between the alternative uses of insufficient means. The substantive meaning implies neither choice nor insufficiency of means; man's livelihood may or may not involve the necessity of choice and, if choice there be, it need not be induced by the limiting effect of a 'scarcity' of the means; indeed, some of the most important physical and social conditions of livelihood such as the availability of air and water or a loving mother's devotion to her infant are not, as a rule, so limiting. The cogency that is in play in the one case and in the other differs as the power of syllogism differs from the force of gravitation. The laws of the one are those of the mind; the laws of the other are those of nature. The two meanings could not be further apart; semantically they lie in opposite directions of the compass.

It is our proposition that only the substantive meaning of economic can yield the basic concepts that are required by the social sciences for an investigation of the empirical economies of the past and present. The frame of reference that we are endeavoring to construct requires, therefore, treatment of the subject matter in substantive terms.

The immediate obstacle in our path lies, as indicated, in that concept of economic in which the two meanings, the substantive and the formal, are compounded. In popular terms, this current concept fuses the 'material' and the 'scarcity' meanings of economic. Such a merger of meanings is, of course, unexceptionable as long as we remain conscious of its restrictive effects. Actually, it excludes from the concept of economic (with the exception of some services) all scarce means other than material ones, as well as all material means and all services, other than scarce ones. This combination of terms sprang from logically adventitious circumstances. The last two centuries produced in Western Europe and North America an organization of man's livelihood to which the rules of choice happened to be singularly applicable. This form of the economy consisted in a system of price-making markets. Since the acts of exchange, as practiced under such a system, of necessity involve the participants in choices induced by an insufficiency of their means, the system could be reduced to a pattern that lent itself to the application of methods based on the formal meaning of economic. As long as the economy was controlled by such a system, the formal and the substantive meanings would run parallel. Laymen accepted this compound concept as a matter of course; but Marshall, Pareto and Durkheim equally adhered to it. Menger alone in his posthumous work criticized the term but neither he nor Max Weber, nor Talcott Parsons after him apprehended the significance of the distinction for sociological analysis. Indeed, there seemed to be no valid reason for distinguishing between the two root meanings of a term which were bound to coincide in practice.

While in common parlance it would have been sheer pedantry to

distinguish between the two meanings of economic, their merging in one compound concept nevertheless was a bane to the social sciences. Economics naturally formed an exception since under the market system its terms were bound to be fairly realistic. But the anthropologist, the sociologist or the historian in his study of the place occupied by the economy in human society was faced with a great variety of institutions other than markets, in which the sphere of man's livelihood was embedded. [Such problems could not be attacked with the help of concepts devised for a special form of the economy, which was dependent upon the presence of definite market elements. The employment of the compound concept fostered what may well be called the "economistic fallacy." It consisted in an artificial identification of the economy with its market form. From Hume and Spencer to Frank H. Knight and Northrop, social thought suffered from this limitation wherever it touched on the economy. Lionel Robbins' essay (1932), though useful to economists, fatefully distorted the problem. In the field of anthropology Melville Herskovits' recent work (1952) represents a relapse after his pioneering effort of 1942. That fallacy had consequences for our general outlook that transcended the sphere of the human economy. However, we can not here treat of this important philosophical aspect of the subject.]

This lays down the rough sequence of our argument. After a closer examination of the concepts derived from the two meanings of economic, starting with the formal and proceeding to the substantive, it should prove possible to apply the substantive approach first to a classification of empirical economies and eventually to trade, money and market institutions. These provide a test case. They have previously been defined in formal terms only; thus any other than a narrow marketing view of these important economic institutions was barred. The treatment of forms of trade, money uses and market elements in substantive terms should, then, bring us considerably nearer the desired frame of reference.

Let us then first examine the manner in which the logic of rational action produces formal economics, and the latter, in turn, gives rise to economic analysis.

Rational action is here defined as choice of means in relation to ends. Means are anything appropriate to serve the end, whether by virtue of the laws of nature or by virtue of the laws of the game. Thus 'rational' does not refer either to ends or to means, but rather to the relating of means to ends. It is not assumed, for instance, that it is more rational to wish to live than to wish to die, or that, in the first case, it is more rational to seek a long life through the means of science than through those of superstition. For whatever the end, it is rational to choose one's means accordingly; and as to the means, it would not be rational to act upon any other test than that which one happens to believe in. Thus it is rational for the sui-

cide to select means that will accomplish his death; and if he be an adept of black magic, to pay a witch doctor to contrive that end.

The logic of rational action applies, then, to all conceivable means and ends covering an almost infinite variety of human interests. In chess or technology, in religious life or philosophy ends may range from commonplace issues to the most recondite and complex ones. Similarly, in the field of the economy, where ends may range from the momentary assuaging of thirst to the attaining of a sturdy old age, while the corresponding means comprise a glass of water and a combined reliance on filial solicitude and open air life, respectively.

Let us now assume that the choice is induced by insufficiency of means and the logic of rational action produces the variant of the theory of choice that we have called formal economics. It is still logically unrelated to the economy, but it is closer to it by one step. Formal economics refers, as we said, to a situation of choice that arises out of an insufficiency of means. This is the so-called scarcity postulate. It requires, first, insufficiency of means; second, that choice be induced by it. Both conditions are factual. Insufficiency of means in relation to ends is simply determined with the help of the operation of 'earmarking', which demonstrates whether there is or is not enough to go round. For insufficiency to induce choice there must be given more than one use to the means, as well as graded ends, i.e., at least two ends ordered in sequence of preference. It is irrelevant whether the reason for which means can be used in one way only happens to be conventional or technological; the same is true of the grading of ends. Having thus defined choice, insufficiency and scarcity in operational terms, it is easy to see that as there is choice of means without insufficiency, so there is insufficiency of means without choice. In effect, scarcity may or may not be present in almost all fields of rational action. Not all philosophy is sheer imaginative creativity, it may also be a matter of economizing with assumptions. Or, to get back to the sphere of man's livelihood, in some civilizations scarcity situations seem to be almost exceptional, in others they appear to be painfully general. However, in either case the presence or absence of scarcity is invariably a question of fact, natural or conventional.

Last but not least is economic analysis. This discipline results from the application of formal economics to an economy of a definite type, namely, a market system. The economy is here embodied in institutions that cause individual choices to give rise to interdependent movements of objects and activities. This is achieved by generalizing the use of price making markets. All goods and services, including the use of labor, land and capital are available for purchase in markets and have, therefore, a price; all forms of income derive from the sale of goods and services—wages, rent and interest, respectively, appearing only as different instances of price according to the items sold. Since money is useless unless

it is scarce, the general introduction of purchasing power as the means of acquisition converts the process of meeting requirements into an allocation of scarce means, namely, money. It follows that both the conditions of choice and its results are quantifiable in the form of prices. It can, therefore, be asserted that by concentrating on price as the economic fact *par excellence*; the formal method of approach offers a total description of the economy as determined by choices induced by an insufficiency of means. The conceptual tools by which this is performed constitute the discipline of economic analysis.

From this follow the limiting conditions under which economic analysis can prove effective as a method. The use of the formal meaning denotes the economy as a sequence of acts of economizing, i.e., of choices induced by scarcity situations. While the rules governing such acts are universal, the extent to which they are applicable to a definite economy depends upon whether or not that economy is, in fact, a sequence of such acts. And for application to be effective, i.e., to produce relevant quantitative results, movements must moreover present themselves as functions of the allocation of insufficient means oriented on resulting prices.

We find, then, that the relation between formal economics and the human economy is, in effect, contingent. Outside of the institutional system of price making markets economic analysis loses most of its relevance as a method of inquiry into the working of a definite economy.

The fount of the substantive concepts is the empirical economy itself. It can be briefly (if not engagingly) defined as an institutionalized process of interaction between man and his environment, which secures him material want satisfaction. Want satisfaction is 'material' if it directly or indirectly involves the use of material means to satisfy ends; also in the case of a definite type of physiological wants, such as food or shelter, that of services only.

Two terms stand out in our definition of the economy: the 'process' and its institutionalizing, or as we will more briefly say, its 'instituting'. Let us see what they contribute to our frame of reference:

The process aspect of the economy suggests analysis in terms of motion. The movements of the useful objects and activities are either changes in location, or appropriation, or both. In other words, the objects and activities may alter their position either by changing places or by changing hands; again, these otherwise very different shifts of position may go together or not.

Between them, these two kinds of movements may be said to exhaust the possibilities comprised in the economic process as a natural and social phenomenon. The locational movement includes production—alongside of transportation—to which the spatial shifting of objects is equally essential. The appropriative movement governs both what is usually re-

ferred to as the circulation of goods and their administration. Roughly, in the first case, the appropriative movement results from transactions, in the second, from dispositions. Accordingly, a transaction is an appropriative movement as between hands; a disposition is a onesided act of the hand, to which by custom or law definite appropriative effects are attached. The term 'hand' here serves to denote public bodies and offices, as well as private persons or firms, the difference between them being mainly a matter of organization. However, it should be admitted that private hands are associated with transactions, while public ones are usually credited with dispositions.

In this description a number of further definitions are implied. Activities, insofar as they form part of the process, may be called economic; institutions are so called to the extent to which they contain a concentration of such activities; any components of the process may be regarded as economic elements. The elements again can be conveniently grouped as ecological, technological or societal according to whether they belong primarily to the natural environment, the mechanical equipment, or the human setting. In the ecological group, geography and climate, land, cattle and raw materials stand out; in the technological, tools and machines are prominent, together with modes of collecting, growing, manufacturing, transporting, storing and consuming of goods; in the societal category, which would tend to occupy the center of interest in the sciences dealing with the human setting, an even greater diversity of matters is compounded, such as labor itself, man's wants and needs, as well as the appropriational aspects of the economy.

Another grouping of the elements as based on substantive criteria is no less significant. Goods are of lower order or of higher order, according to the manner of their usefulness from the consumer's point of view. This famous 'order of goods' sets consumers' goods against producers' goods, according to whether they satisfy wants directly, or only indirectly, through a combination with other goods. This type of interaction of the elements represents an essential of the economy in the substantive sense of the term, namely, production.

Thus a series of concepts old and new accrues to our frame of reference by virtue of the process aspect of the economy. However, reduced to a physical, physiological and psychological interaction of elements that process would possess no all-round reality. True, from the ecological and technological angle it represents an important subject for study, since it contains the bare bones of the processes of production and transportation (as well as the items of appropriative changes). Yet in the absence of any indication of societal conditions from which the organized and structured motives of the individuals spring, there would be little, if anything, to sustain the interdependence of the movements or their recurrence on which the unity and the stability of the process de-

pend. The interacting elements of nature and humanity would form no coherent unit, in effect, no structural entity that could be said to have a function in society or to possess a history. That process would lack, therefore, the very qualities which cause common thought as well as scholarship to turn towards matters of human livelihood as a field of eminent practical and theoretical interest.

Hence the transcending importance of that other, the institutional, aspect of the economy. What occurs on the process level between man and soil in hoeing a garden plot or what happens on the conveyor belt in the constructing of an automobile is, *prima facie* a jig-sawing of human and non-human movements. Yet, from the institutional point of view this process of interaction is the referent of the terms labor and capital, craft and union, slacking and speeding, the spreading of risks and all the other semantic units of the social context. The choice between capitalism and socialism, for example, refers to two different ways of instituting modern technology for the purposes of production. Or, to give another instance: the industrialization of underdeveloped countries involves, on the one hand, alternative techniques, on the other, alternative methods of their instituting.

The instituting of the economic process vests that process with unity and stability; it produces a structure with a definite function in society; in shifting its place in society, that entity acquires a history; interest is, as a rule, related to action or policy. Unity and stability, structure and function, history and policy spell out the operational content of the statement that the human economy is an instituted process.

The human economy, then, is embedded and enmeshed in institutions, economic and non-economic. The inclusion of the latter is vital. For religion or government may be as important for the structure and functioning of the economy as are monetary institutions or the improvement of tools that lighten the toil of labor.

The study of the shifting place occupied by the economy in society is the study of the manner in which the economic process is instituted at different times and places.

## 2. *The Classification of Empirical Economies, Past and Present*

The classification of empirical economies, then, might best take its start from the manner in which economies are integrated. Integration is one of the effects of the instituting of the economic process—a condition, apart from which such a process, as we saw, can not actually exist. The societal background of the process structures the motives which are responsible for the tendency of the movements towards interdependence and recurrence. The different types of movements through which the

effect is achieved we will call forms of integration. Their number being small, they are convenient for classification. Since, however, different forms of integration may occur side by side on different levels and in different sectors of the economy, we shall regard that one as dominant which integrates the factors of production, land and labor, with the rest of the economy.

Empirically, we find the main forms of integration to be reciprocity, redistribution and exchange. Reciprocity denotes movements between correlative points of symmetrical groupings in society; redistribution designates movements toward an allocative center and out of it again; exchange refers to vice-versa movements taking place as between 'hands' under a market system. Reciprocity, then, requires as its background, symmetrically arranged groupings; redistribution is dependent upon some measure of centrality in the group; exchange, in order to produce integration requires the presence of a system of price-making markets. It is apparent that the different forms of integration involve the presence of definite institutional supports.

At this point a terminological clarification may be welcome. The terms reciprocity, redistribution and exchange, by which we refer to our forms of integration, are also loosely employed to denote personal relationships. Thus it might seem as if our forms of integration merely reflected aggregates of the respective forms of individual behavior: If reciprocation or mutuality between individuals were frequent, a reciprocative integration would emerge; where sharing or voluntary distribution among individuals were common, redistributive integration would be present; similarly frequent acts of barter or exchange between individuals would result in exchange as a form of integration. If this were so, our forms of integration would be indeed no more than societal aggregates of corresponding forms of behavior on the personal level. To be sure, we insisted that the integrative effect was conditioned by the presence of definite structure patterns, such as symmetrical arrangements, central points and market systems, respectively. But can these structures be accepted as independent variables? Or rather, do they not represent merely a form of the self-same personal behavior pattern the eventual effects of which they are supposed to condition? The significant fact is that they do *not*.

Mere aggregates of the personal behavior in question do not produce such structure patterns. Reciprocity behavior between individuals, for instance, integrates the economy only if symmetrically organized structures, such as a symmetrical system of kinship groups are given. Yet in the nature of things, a kinship system does not arise as the result of reciprocating individual behavior on the personal level. Similarly, in regard to redistribution. It presupposes the presence of an allocative center in the community, yet the organization and validation of such a center does



not come about merely as a consequence of frequent acts of sharing or distribution as between individuals. Finally, the same is true of the market system. Acts of exchange or barter on the personal level produce prices only if they occur under a system of price-making markets, an institutional setup which is nowhere created by mere random acts of exchange. We do not wish to imply, of course, that those supporting patterns are the outcome of some mysterious forces acting outside the range of personal or individual behavior. We merely insist that if, in any given case, the societal effects of individual behavior depend on the presence of definite institutional conditions, these latter conditions do not for that reason result from the personal behavior in question. Superficially, the supporting pattern may sometimes seem to result from a mere cumulation of a corresponding kind of personal behavior, but the vital element of validation is necessarily contributed by a different type of behavior.

The first writer to our knowledge to have hit upon the factual connection between reciprocative behavior on the personal level, on the one hand, and independently given symmetrical groupings on the other, was the anthropologist Richard Thurnwald, in 1915, in an empirical study on the marriage system of the Banaro of New Guinea. Bronislaw Malinowski, some ten years later, referring to Thurnwald, predicted that socially relevant reciprocation would regularly be found to rest on symmetrical forms of basic social organization. His own description of the Trobriand kinship system as well as of the Kula trade bore out the point. This lead was followed up by the author, in regarding reciprocity as merely *one* of several forms of integration, and symmetry as *one* of several supporting patterns. He then added redistribution and exchange to reciprocity, as further forms of integration; similarly, he added centricity and market to symmetry, as other instances of institutional support.

This should help to explain why in the economic sphere personal behavior so often fails to have the expected societal effects in the absence of definite pre-conditions. Only in a symmetrically organized environment will reciprocative behavior result in economic institutions of any importance; only where allocative centers have been set up can individual acts of sharing produce a redistributive economy; and only in the presence of a system of price-making markets will exchange acts of individuals result in fluctuating prices that integrate the economy. Otherwise such acts of barter will remain ineffective and therefore tend not to occur. Should they nevertheless happen, in a random fashion, a violent emotional reaction would set in, as against acts of indecency or acts of treason, since trading behavior is never indifferent behavior and is not, therefore, tolerated by opinion outside of the approved channels.

Let us now return to our forms of integration.

A group which deliberately undertook to organize its economic relationships on a reciprocative footing would, to effect its purpose, have

to split up into sub-groups, the corresponding members of which could identify one another as such. Members of Group A would then be able to establish relationships of reciprocity with their counterparts in Group B and vice versa. But symmetry is not restricted to duality. Three, four, or more groups may be symmetrical in regard to two or more axes; also members of the groups need not reciprocate with one another but may do so with the corresponding members of third groups towards which they stand in analogous relations. A Trobriand man's responsibility is towards his sister's family. But he himself is not on that account assisted by his sister's husband, but, if he is married, by his own wife's brother—a member of a third, correspondingly placed family.

Aristotle taught that to every kind of community (*koinōnia*) there belonged amongst its members a corresponding kind of good will (*philia*) which expressed itself in reciprocity (*antipeponthos*). Assuming this to be true, human communities are endowed with a tendency towards multiple symmetry in regard to which reciprocative behavior may develop. Of communities in this broad sense there exist a large number, for a permanent community, i.e., a tribe or village would include many other subordinate ones. It may be said that the closer the members of the encompassing community feel drawn to one another, the more general will be the tendency among them to develop reciprocative attitudes in regard to specific relationships limited in space, time or otherwise. Kinship, neighborhood, or totem belong to the more permanent and comprehensive groupings; within their compass voluntary and semi-voluntary associations of a military, vocational, religious or social character would create situations in which at least transitorily or in regard to a given locality, or a typical situation there would form symmetrical groupings the members of which practice some sort of mutuality.

Reciprocity as a form of integration gains greatly in power by its capacity of employing both redistribution and exchange as subordinate methods. Sharing of the burdens of labor may be subject to reciprocity, if the sharing is done according to definite redistributive rules, as e.g. taking things 'in turn.' Similarly, exchange at set equivalencies may be practiced reciprocally for the benefit of the partner who happens to be short of some kind of necessities—a fundamental institution in ancient Oriental societies.

Redistribution obtains within a group to the extent to which the allocation of goods is collected in one hand and takes place by virtue of custom, law or *ad hoc* central decision. Sometimes it amounts to physical collecting accompanied by storage-cum-redistribution, at other times the 'collecting' is not physical, but merely appropriational, rights of disposal being collected in one hand, without any accompanying change in the physical location of the goods. Redistribution occurs for many reasons,

on all civilizational levels, from the primitive hunting tribe to the vast storage systems of ancient Egypt, Sumeria, Babylonia, or Peru. In large countries differences of soil and climate may make the reuniting of labor necessary; in other cases it is caused by discrepancy in point of time, as between harvest and consumption. With a hunt, any other method of distribution would lead to disintegration of the horde or band, since only 'division of labor' can here ensure results; a redistribution of purchasing power may be valued for its own sake, i.e. for purposes demanded by social ideals as in the modern welfare state. The principle remains always the same—collecting into, and redistributing from, a center. Redistribution may also apply to a group smaller than society, such as the household or manor irrespective of the way in which the economy as a whole is integrated. The best known instances are the Central African *kraal*, the Hebrew patriarchal household, the Greek estate of Aristotle's time, the Roman *familia*, the medieval manor, or the typical large peasant household before the general marketing of grain. However, only under a comparatively advanced form of agricultural society is householding practicable, and then, fairly general. Before that the widely spread institution of the 'small family' is not economically instituted, except for some cooking of food; the use of pasture, land or cattle is still dominated by redistributive or reciprocative methods on a broader than family scale.

Redistribution, too, is apt to integrate groups at all levels and of all degrees of permanence from the state itself to units of a transitory character. Here, again, as with reciprocity, the more closely knit the encompassing unit, the more varied will be the subdivisions in which redistribution can effectively operate. Plato taught that the number of citizens in the state should be 5040. This figure is divisible in 59 different ways, including division by the first ten numerals. For the assessment of taxes, the carrying of military and other burdens 'in turn,' etc., it would allow the widest scope, he explained.

Exchange as a form of integration requires the institutional support of a system of price-making markets. Insofar as exchange at set prices is in question, the economy is integrated by the factors which fix the price, not by the market mechanism. Even price-making markets are integrative only if they are linked up in a system which tends to spread the effect of the prices to other markets than those directly affected.

Higgling-haggling has been rightly recognized as being of the essence of bargaining behavior. In order for exchange to be integrative it must be oriented on producing a price that is as favorable to either partner as he can make it. Such a behavior contrasts sharply with that if exchange at a set price. The ambiguity of the term 'gain' tends to cover up the difference: Exchange at set prices involves no more than the gain

to either party implied in the decision of exchanging; exchange at fluctuating prices aims at a gain that can be attained only by an attitude involving a distinctive relationship between the partners. The element of antagonism, however diluted, that accompanies the latter variant of exchange is ineradicable. No community intent on protecting the fount of solidarity between its members can allow such a latent hostility to develop around a matter as vital to animal existence and, therefore, capable of arousing as tense anxieties as food. Hence the universal banning of transactions of a gainful nature in regard to food and foodstuffs in primitive and archaic society. The very widely spread ban on higgling-haggling over victuals automatically removes price-making markets from the realm of early institutions.

A classification of economies according to the dominant form of integration is illuminating. What historians are traditionally wont to call 'economic systems' falls fairly into this pattern. The dominance of a form of integration depends, as stated, on the degree to which it comprises land and labor in society. A tribal community or, in even looser terms, a savage society, is characterized by the integration of land and labor into the economy by way of the ties of kinship. In feudal society the ties of fealty determine the fate of land and the labor that goes with it. In the floodwater empires land was largely distributed and sometimes redistributed by temple or palace, and so was labor, at least in its dependent form. The rise of the market to a ruling force in the economy can be traced by noting the extent to which land and food were mobilized through exchange, and labor was turned into a commodity free to be purchased in the market. This may help to explain the relevancy of the historically untenable stages theory of slavery, serfdom and wage labor that is traditional with Marxism—a classification which flowed from the conviction that the character of the economy was set by the status of labor. However, the integration of the soil into the economy should be regarded as hardly less vital.

In any case, forms of integration do not represent 'stages' of development. No sequence in time is implied. Several subordinate forms may be present alongside of the dominant one, which may itself recur after a temporary eclipse. Tribal societies practice reciprocity and redistribution, while archaic societies are predominantly redistributive, though to some extent they may allow room for exchange. Reciprocity, which plays a dominant part in some Melanesian communities, survives as a not unimportant although subordinate trait in the redistributive archaic empires, where foreign trade is still largely organized on the principle of reciprocity. Indeed, during an emergency it was reintroduced on a large scale in the twentieth century, under the name of

lend-lease, with societies where otherwise marketing and exchange were dominant. Redistribution, the ruling method in tribal and archaic society beside which exchange plays only a minor part, grew to great importance in the later Roman Empire and is actually gaining ground today in modern industrial states. The Soviet Union is an extreme instance. Conversely, more than once in the course of human history markets have played a part in the economy, although never on a territorial scale, or with an institutional comprehensiveness comparable to that of the nineteenth century. However, here again a change is noticeable. In our century, a recession of markets from their nineteenth century peak set in—a turn of the trend which, incidentally, takes us back to our starting point, namely, the increasing inadequacy of marketing definitions for the purposes of the social scientist.

### 3. *Trade, Money and Market Institutions*

Once economic phenomena are equated with market phenomena, logically no room is left for the problems of trade and money as apart from markets. Catallactically, trade and money are functions of the market; the three form one conceptual whole. Trade appears as a two-way movement of goods through the market, and money as a means of exchange designed to facilitate that movement. Since trade is directed by prices, and prices are a function of markets, all trade is market trade just as all money is exchange money.

Consider the effects of such concepts on empirical research. Eventually, they must induce an acceptance of the heuristic principle, according to which where trade is in evidence, markets should be assumed, and where money is in evidence, trade and markets should be assumed. Again, this must result in a tendency of seeing markets where there are none, and ignoring trade and money where they are present, if markets happen to be absent.

As against this web of preconceptions stands the fact that trade is as old as mankind, and so are some money uses. Markets, on the other hand, although meetings of a broadly similar character may have existed as early as the neolithic age, emerge as integrative institutions at a comparatively very late state in history. However, not even these massive facts could be uncovered as long as the concepts of trade and money were derived, as in the Ricardian system, from exchange as a form of integration. The study of trade and money institutions during those early periods of history when reciprocity and redistribution integrated the economy were, in effect, put out of bounds by a restrictive terminology. Our task, then, is to develop substantive terms of trade, money and market that are suitable for the study of these institutions under all forms of integration.

Trade from the catallactic view point is, as we saw, the movement of goods on their way through the market. All commodities—goods produced for sale in the market—are here potential objects of trade; one commodity is moving in one direction, the other in the opposite direction; the movement is controlled by prices; trade and markets are co-terminous.

The substantive meaning of trade is independent of markets. Essentially, it is a method of procuring goods that are not available on the spot. Emphasis upon this aspect brings out the dominance of the import interest in the history of trade. The export interest—a typically catallactic phenomenon—loomed large only since the Nineteenth Century.

Trade therefore resembles activities which we are used to associating with hunts, slave expeditions, or piratic raids, the point of similarity being the acquisition and carrying of goods from a distance.

Like hunt, expedition or raid, trade is under undisturbed native conditions not so much an individual as a group activity. In this regard it is akin to tribal forms of wooing and mating, which are often concerned with the acquisition of wives from a distance by more or less peaceful means (and are undertaken as a public venture). In the same way, trade centers in an external contact: the meeting of communities. Whether a chief collects the 'export' goods from the members of the group and then acts for the community, or whether the members in the flesh meet their counterparts on the beach—in either case the proceedings are collective.

What distinguishes trade from questing for game, booty and plunder is the two-sidedness of the movement, which also ensures its broadly peaceful and fairly regular character. According to the manner in which the two-sidedness of the movement is instituted, three main types of trade can be distinguished: gift trade, administered trade, and market trade.

Gift trade links partners who stand in relationship of reciprocity, such as guest-friends; Kula partners; visiting villages; military allies practicing lend-lease. Over millennia trade between empires was largely carried on as gift trade—no other *rationale* of two-sidedness would meet quite as well the needs of the situation. The organization of trading is ceremonial, involving mutual presentations; embassies; political deals between chiefs, kings, or governments. The goods are often treasure goods, and as such objects of elite circulation; in the border case of 'visiting parties' the goods may be of a more 'democratic' character. However, contacts are always tenuous and exchanges mostly far-between.

Administered trade has its foundations in governmental agreements of a more or less formal nature. At least one of the parties favors redistributive methods in its foreign trade set-up. The understanding be-

tween the parties may be tacit, as in the case of traditional or customary relationships. Between sovereign bodies such trade, if carried on on a large scale, assumes, as a rule, the existence of regular treaties. Even in the relatively early days of the second millennium B.C. with its occasional gift trade between sovereigns, administered trade is regularly carried on through governmental or guild channels or other relatively permanent trading bodies such as we meet later in the chartered companies of the mercantilist period in Europe.

The specialized organ of administered trade is the Port of Trade, usually situated on the borders of at least one of the trading territories. It may be coastal, riverain or inland. Its main function is to offer military security for access to trade as well as civil protection to the foreign trader, besides a number of vital facilities to both parties.

Many matters have to be coped with, such as arrangements concerning 'rates' or 'proportions' of the units that form an assortment; the weighing and checking of the quality of the goods; their physical exchange; storage, safekeeping; the control of the trading personnel; regulation of 'payments'; credits; and price-differentials. Much of this falls under the heading of the actual collection of the export goods and the repartition of the imported ones—procedures which both belong to the redistributive sphere of the domestic economy. The goods which are mutually imported are standardized in regard to quality and package, weight, or other easily ascertainable criteria. Only such 'trade goods' can be traded. Their equivalencies are set out in simple unit relations; in principle the ratio is 1:1.

Once a treaty has been negotiated, higgling-haggling is no longer part of the proceedings; rather, the purpose is to exclude it. But since in order to meet changing circumstances bargaining often cannot be avoided, it is preferably practised on other items than 'price', such as measures, quality, means of payment, and even profits. The rationale of this astonishing procedure is, of course, to keep equivalencies unchanged; if adjustment to supply situations is unavoidable, as in an emergency, this is phrased as trading 2:1 or  $2\frac{1}{2}:1$ , or as the European traveler would put it, at 100% or 150% profit. This method of negotiating on profits in terms of stable prices, a practice which must have been fairly general in archaic society, is well authenticated for the Central Sudan at as late a period as the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

Market trade is the third typical form of trading. This comparatively recent form of trade released a torrent of material wealth over Western Europe and North America. Though no longer the only form of modern trading, it is still by far the most important. The organization of trade is here embedded in the market. The range of tradable goods—the commodities—is practically unlimited. And the supply-demand-price mechanism is adaptable to the handling not only of goods proper but of every

feature or element of trade itself—storage, transportation, risk, credit, payments, etc.—by forming special markets for freight, insurance, short-term credit, capital, warehouse space, banking facilities, and so on. The preponderance of that mechanism is in our days so great that the very distinction between trade and market may appear artificial; while the sharp contrast that characterized them in their beginnings seems to us almost paradoxical.

Take the role played by the specificity of goods in trade and market, respectively. While neither of them can escape the influence of specificity, the market is a leveller—it renders homogeneous what nature and history made different. Trade, on the other hand, tends to be specific. Unless full weight is accorded to this fact, no understanding of the early development of trade is possible.

There is originally no such thing as trading ‘in general.’ A brief list of the early goods will show why trading had several separate and independent origins. Note the characteristics of the various goods. Cattle and captives can be driven away by raiders; slabs of stone and trunks of trees employed in the construction of imposing temples must be hauled by expeditionary forces; gold and silver objects are treasure that circulates only among the elite of gods, kings and chiefs; copper, tin, and, later, iron go to equip armies; timber, hemp and tar to build navies. Exports are collected in the archaic state by administrative methods as was grain in Sumeria; wool and dried fish under the Third Dynasty of Ur; fur and wax under the Varaengian princes of Kiev. Imports are a different matter again. The great empires of antiquity largely secured them in kind, as tribute. Even classical Attica mostly procured its corn or at least a reduction of its price by political means. It would be easy to show how all these ‘branches of trade,’ even after two-sidedness had become a prominent feature of trade, were still found to be organized along the lines of their sociologically and technologically variegated origins.

The specificity of early trade would therefore be enhanced rather than diminished by the two-sidedness of the act. Under non-market conditions, imports and exports may fall under separate and different administrative regimes. The process through which goods are made available for export is frequently distinct from, and independent of, that by which the imported goods are distributed domestically. Exports may be extracted from a subject population, while the repartitioned imports cascade along more exalted lines.

This specificity of non-market trade is chiefly responsible for the absence of continuous enterprise under archaic conditions. Trade is here restricted to single undertakings, a circumstance, which limits the development of trade partnerships. As a rule, a business deal comprises only one venture that is liquidated before another one is started. The



Roman *societas*, and the medieval *commenda* formed such *ad hoc* partnerships. The *societas publicanorum* of all trade associations alone was incorporated—it was the one great exception. Not before modern times was continuous business partnership in trade known.

Trade routes as well as means of carriage are of no less incisive importance for the forms of trade than the types of goods carried. In either case geographical and technological facts interpenetrate with the social structure to create institutional diversity.

The market does away with all these distinctions. Matters as different as goods and their transportation are equated since both can be bought and sold in the market, the one in the commodity market, the other in the freight and insurance market. In either case there is supply, demand and price formed in a like fashion; also in each case there is cost, that uniform residue of market alchemy.

The main interest of the economic historian lies in the elucidation of the process by which trade becomes linked with markets. At what time and place do we meet the general result, market-trade? Conversely, why does this form of trade give way once more, as in our days, to administered trade, or still other forms of trading? Strictly speaking, all such questions are precluded under the sway of catallactic logic.

The catallactic definition of money is that of means of indirect exchange. Modern money is used for payment and as a 'standard' precisely because it is a means of exchange. Thus money is 'all-purpose' money. Other uses of money are merely unimportant variants of its exchange use, and all money uses are dependent upon the existence of markets.

The substantive definition of money like that of trade is independent of markets. It is derived from definite uses to which quantifiable objects are put. These uses are payment, standard and exchange. Money therefore is defined here as quantifiable objects employed in any one or several of these uses. The question is whether independent definitions of those uses are possible.

The definitions of the various money uses contain two criteria: the sociologically defined situation in which the use arises, and the operation performed with the money objects in that situation.

Payment is the discharge of obligations through a changing of hands of quantifiable objects. The situation of obligation refers here not to one kind of obligation only, but to several of them, since only if an object is used to discharge various obligations can we speak of it as 'means of payment' in the distinctive sense of the term (otherwise merely an obligation to be discharged in kind is so discharged).

The payment use of money belongs to its most common uses in early times. Obligations do not here commonly spring from transactions. In unstratified primitive society payments are regularly made in con-

nection with the institutions of bride price, blood money, and fines. In archaic society such payments continue, but they are over-shadowed by customary dues, taxes, rent and tribute that give rise to payments on the largest scale.

The standard, or accounting use of money is the equating of amounts of different kinds of goods for definite purposes. The 'situation' is either barter or the management of staples; the 'operation' consists in attaching numerical tags to the various objects to facilitate the manipulation of those objects. Thus in the case of barter, the summation of objects on either side can be eventually equated; in the case of the management of staples the possibility of planning, balancing, budgeting, as well as general accounting is attained.

The standard use of money is essential to the elasticity of the system in redistributive economies. The equating of such staples as barley, oil and wool, i.e. the staples in which the taxes or rents are paid as well as in which rations or wages are claimed is vital, since it ensures the possibility of choice between the different staples for either payer or claimant. At the same time the preconditions of large scale finance 'in kind' are created.

The exchange use of money is the use of quantifiable objects for indirect exchange. The 'operation' consists in acquiring units of quantifiable objects through direct exchange, in order to acquire the desired objects through a further act of exchange. Sometimes the money objects are available from the start, and their indirect exchange is merely designed to net an increased amount of the same objects. Such a use of quantifiable objects develops not from random acts of barter—a favored fancy of eighteenth century rationalism—but only in connection with organized trade, especially through markets. In the absence of markets the exchange use of money is no more than a subordinate culture trait. The reluctance of the great trading peoples of antiquity such as Tyre and Carthage to adopt coins, that new form of money eminently suited for exchange, was due to the fact that the ports of trade of these commercial empires were not organized as markets.

Two exceptions should be noted. The one extends the definition of money to other than physical objects, namely to ideal units; the other extends it to other than the three conventional money uses, namely to the use of money objects as an operational device.

Ideal units are mere verbalizations or written symbols employed as quantifiable units, mainly for payment or as a standard. The 'operation' consists in the manipulation of debt accounts according to the rules of the game. Such accounts are facts of primitive life and not, as was often believed, peculiar to monetarized economies.

The use of quantifiable objects for operational devices is designed as a means by which simple manual operations resolve complex problems

by a short cut. It seemed advisable to include under money uses the employment of quantifiable objects to such manipulative ends, since money objects are frequently used in archaic society for arithmetical, statistical, taxational, administrative or other purposes connected with economic life.

Early money is, as we saw, special-purpose money. Different kinds of objects are employed in the different money uses, moreover, these uses are instituted independently of one another. The implications of this fact are of the most far-reaching nature. There is, therefore, no contradiction involved in 'paying' with a means with which one cannot buy, nor in employing objects as a 'standard' which are not used as a means of exchange. In Hammurapi's Babylonia barley was the means of payment; silver was the universal standard; in exchange, of which there was very little, both were used alongside of oil, wool, and many other staples. It becomes apparent why money uses—similarly to trade activities—can reach an almost unlimited level of development, not only outside of market-dominated economies, but in the very absence of markets.

Now, the market itself. Catallactically, the market is the *locus* of exchange; market and exchange are co-extensive. For under the catallactic postulate economic life is both reducible to acts of exchange effected through higgling-haggling and it is embodied in markets. Exchange then can be described as *the* economic relationship, with the market as *the* economic institution. The definition of the market derives logically from the catallactic premises.

Under the substantive range of terms, market and exchange have independent empirical characteristics. What then is here the meaning of exchange and market? And to what extent are they overlapping?

Exchange, substantively defined, is the mutual appropriative movement of goods between hands. Such a vice-versa movement may occur on different levels: Firstly, at indeterminate rates; secondly, at set rates; thirdly, at bargained rates. The third and last is the result of higgling-haggling between the partners. Set rates are either customary, statutory or proclaimed. Finally, what we referred to as 'indeterminate rates' are neither bargained nor set, they are the outcome of various other operations connected with the vice-versa movement of goods, such as Christmas gifts, auctions, lotteries or taxation.

Indeterminate rates are characteristic of reciprocative practices such as are connected with dowry and bride price or international lend-lease, as well as of redistributive arrangements such as picnics or national taxation systems, the actual rate of exchange emerging, as a rule, only subsequent to the movement of the goods. Uncertainty of the rate is sometimes of the essence of the matter, though it need not be. In some cases the determining of the rate is deliberately left over, as between

friends who regard it as a subordinate matter; also the rate may, in the nature of things, not be capable of determination at the time of the transaction, though afterwards it emerges from a calculus of probability or from the actual course of events.

However, where there is exchange, there is a rate. This principle remains unaffected whether the rate be bargained, set, or indeterminate as to the limits within which it is designed to move; the point of time at which it becomes known; or the degree of probability which attaches to it.

We can, then, speak of exchange at the first, second, and third level. It will be noted that the third variant of exchange is identical both with catallactic exchange and with our 'exchange as a form of integration'. This level of exchange alone is limited to market institutions, namely to price making markets.

Market institutions shall be defined as institutions comprising a supply crowd or a demand crowd or both. Supply crowds and demand crowds again, shall be defined as a multiplicity of hands desirous to acquire, or alternatively, to dispose of, goods in exchange. Although market institutions, therefore, are exchange institutions, market and exchange are *not* coterminous. Exchange at set rates and, similarly, exchange at indeterminate rates occurs under reciprocative or redistributive forms of integration; exchange at bargained rates is limited to price-making markets. It may seem paradoxical that first and second level exchange should be compatible with any form of integration except that of exchange: yet this follows logically since only third level exchange represents exchange in the catallactic sense of the term, in which it is a form of integration.

The best way of approaching the world of market institutions appears to be in terms of 'market elements'. Eventually, this will not only serve as a guide through the variety of configurations subsumed under the name of markets and market type institutions, but also as a tool with which to dissect some of the conventional concepts that obstruct our understanding of those institutions.

Two of the market elements should be regarded as specific, namely, supply crowds and demand crowds; if either or both are present, we shall speak of a market institution (if both are present, we call it a market; if one of them only, a market type institution). Next in importance is the element of equivalency, i.e., the rate of exchange; according to the character of the equivalency, markets are set-price markets or price making markets. Competition is another characteristic of some market institutions, such as price making markets and auctions, but in contrast to equivalencies, economic competition is restricted to markets. Finally, there are elements that can be designated as functional. Regularly they

occur apart from market institutions, but if they make their appearance alongside of supply crowds or demand crowds, they pattern out those institutions in a manner that may be of great practical relevance. Amongst these functional elements are physical site, goods present, custom and law. According to the configuration of the elements, markets may be 'visible', insofar as they possess a definite site, or 'invisible', if, as in the modern market, such is not the case; they may have one rate of exchange only for the same kind of goods, or a whole range of rates for practically identical specimens as in the bazaar; they may require 'goods present' as in the medieval 'open market', or goods need not be present as in the invisible market of our day. And so on, with many variants.

This diversity was in recent times obscured in the name of the formal concept of a supply-demand-price mechanism. No wonder that it is in regard to the pivotal terms of supply, demand and price that the substantive approach leads to a significant widening of our outlook.

Supply crowds and demand crowds were referred to above as separate and distinct market elements. In regard to the modern market this would be, of course, inadmissible; here there is a price level at which bears turn bulls, and another price level at which the miracle is reversed. This has induced many to overlook the fact that buyers and sellers are separate in any other than the modern type of market. This again gave support to a twofold misconception. Firstly, 'supply and demand' appeared as combined elemental forces while actually each consisted of two very different components, namely, of *goods*, on the one hand, and *persons*, related to those goods, on the other. Secondly, 'supply and demand' seemed inseparable, while forming, in effect, distinct groups of persons, according to whether they disposed of the goods as of resources, or sought them as requirements. Supply crowds and demand crowds need not therefore be present together. When, for instance, booty is auctioned by the victorious general to the highest bidder only a demand crowd is in evidence; similarly, only a supply crowd is met with when contracts are assigned to the lowest submission. Yet auctions and submissions were wide-spread in archaic society, and in ancient Greece auctions ranked amongst the precursors of markets proper. This distinctness of 'supply' and 'demand' crowds shaped the organization of all pre-modern market institutions. So much for the Siamese twins 'supply' and 'demand'.

As to the market element commonly called 'price', we generalized it as equivalency. The use of this term should help to avoid misunderstandings. Price suggests fluctuation, while equivalency lacks this association. The very phrase 'set' or 'fixed' implies that the price, before being fixed or set was apt to change. Thus language itself makes it difficult to convey the true state of affairs, namely that originally the 'price' is a rigidly

fixed quantity, in the absence of which trading can not start. Changing or fluctuating prices of a competitive character are a comparatively recent development and one of the main interests of economic history. Traditionally, the sequence was supposed to be the reverse.

Equivalencies, then, up to a point correspond to forms of integration. 'Price' is the designation of quantitative ratios between goods of different kinds, effected through barter or higgling-haggling. It is that form of equivalency which is characteristic of economies that are integrated through bargaining exchange. But equivalencies are by no means restricted to such relations. Under a redistributive form of integration equivalencies are also common. They designate here the quantitative relationship between goods of different kinds that are acceptable in payment of taxes, rents, dues, fines, or that denote qualifications for a civic status dependent on a property census. At the same time the equivalency sets the ratio at which wages or rations in kind can be claimed, at the beneficiary's choosing. The necessary elasticity of a system of staple finance—the planning, balancing and accounting—hinges on this. It is not what should be given *for* another good, but what can be claimed *instead* of it. Under reciprocative forms of integration, again, equivalencies determine the amount that is 'adequate' in relation to the symmetrically placed party. Clearly, this behavioral context is different from either exchange or redistribution.

Price systems, incidentally, may contain layers of equivalencies that historically originated under different forms of integration. Hellenistic market prices show ample evidence of having derived from redistributive equivalencies of the cuneiform civilizations that preceded them. The 30 pieces of silver received as the price of a man by Judas for betraying Jesus was a close variant of the equivalency of a slave as set out in Hammurapi's Code some 1700 years earlier. Soviet redistributive equivalencies, on the other hand, for a long time echoed nineteenth century world market prices. These, too, in their turn, had their predecessors. Max Weber remarked that Western capitalism would not have been possible for lack of a costing basis but for the medieval network of statuated and regulated prices, customary rents etc., the legacy of gild and manor. Thus price systems may have an institutional history of their own in terms of the types of equivalencies that entered into their making.

It is with the help of non-catalectic concepts of this kind that such fundamental problems of economic and social history as the origin of fluctuating prices and the development of market trading can be tackled and will be eventually resolved.

To conclude: A critical survey of the catalectic definitions of trade, money and market should make available a number of concepts which form the raw material of the social sciences in their economic

aspect. The scarcity definition of economic has its special use in the sphere of market institutions; outside of that restricted field substantive definitions alone are appropriate.

The bearing of this recognition on questions of theory, policy and outlook should be viewed in the light of the institutional transformation that has been in progress since the first World War. Even in regard to the market-system itself, the market as the sole frame of reference is out of date. Yet, as should be clearly realized, the market can not be superseded in that function unless the social sciences succeed in developing a wider frame of reference to which the market itself is referable. Such a conceptual structure, as we have attempted to show, will have to be grounded on the substantive meaning of economic.

15 The Obsolete  
"Anti-Market" Mentality:  
A Critique of the  
Substantive Approach  
to Economic  
Anthropology



Scott Cook

FEW EDITORIAL DECISIONS MADE IN COMPILING THIS VOLUME MAY BE EXPECTED to give rise to so much heat as that which led, not to reprinting this stimulating article by Scott Cook, but to permitting it to be the last word on the subject. A number of things are already available which carry the argument beyond the point here represented. For example, Frank Cancian came out immediately with a criticism of this specific paper in the same journal and Cook has replied. In cutting short the discussion the editor was moved by two precepts. He took seriously the Confucian suggestion that for the good student it is enough to raise one corner of a problem and not all of its convoluted edges. He also is of the belief that a book such as this must be an introduction to things deemed important in the discipline; it is not an introduction to the thoughts of the editor, who often disagrees with some of the materials he reproduces.

Having said that, the editor will abuse his editorial privilege by suggesting one of his misgivings about Cook's approach. This has to do with the distinction between "pristine" and "secondary" situations (see II:28). In this case it may be profitable to inquire if Cook is really meeting Polanyi (II:14) head on. There can be little question that all con-

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At the time this article was written Howard Scott Cook (b. 1937) was in Mexico doing fieldwork for his doctoral dissertation. A graduate student at the University of Pittsburgh, he is a Public Health Service Fellow. His dissertation is on the topic "Artisan Sub-culture and Exchange Relations in a Modernizing Peasant Economy."



*temporary economies are enmeshed to some degree in what we refer to abstractly as the world economy. That is, to some extent all have been penetrated by money and the effects of a market, no matter how far away from the market place. But the effects of a variety of forms of imperialism and colonialism and other aspects of the expansion of certain dominant economies should not obscure the possibility that formerly there may have existed other frameworks for economic systems and some of these may have been so organized as to elude capture and understanding by economic theories based on markets and scarcity.*

*Analytic work begins with material provided by our vision of things, and this vision is ideological almost by definition. It embodies the picture of things as we see them, and wherever there is any possible motive for wishing to see them in a given rather than another light, the way in which we see things can hardly be distinguished from the way in which we wish to see them. The more honest and naive our vision is, the more dangerous it is to the eventual emergence of anything for which general validity can be claimed. The inference for the social sciences is obvious, and it is not even true that he who hates a social system will form an objectively more correct vision of it than he who loves it. For love distorts indeed, but hate distorts still more.*

JOSEPH SCHUMPETER

## *I. The Problem<sup>1</sup>*

Economic anthropology, a major sub-area of anthropological inquiry, is plagued by a serious communication gap between its practitioners. Since the impact on the field of the writings of Karl Polanyi and his followers, a clear-cut dichotomy has emerged between scholars who maintain that "formal" economic theory is applicable to the analysis of "primitive" and "peasant" economies and those who believe that it is limited in application to the market-oriented, price-governed economic

<sup>1</sup> This paper was originally drafted for presentation in a graduate seminar on "Models and Model-building in Anthropology" conducted at the University of Pittsburgh during the Winter Trimester of 1964-65 by Dr. Leonard Kasdan. I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Kasdan, Dr. Hugo Nutini, David Gregory, and Roger Peranio for their helpful comments and criticisms during the preparation of this manuscript.

<sup>2</sup> The former group includes D. M. Goodfellow, Raymond Firth, K. F. Walker, Melville Herskovits, Richard Salisbury, Edward LeClair, Robbins Burling, C. S. Belshaw, and others. The latter group includes Karl Polanyi, C. M. Arensberg, Daniel Fusfield, Walter Neale, George Dalton, Paul Bohannon, Marshall Sahlins, and others. Another split among economic anthropologists is between those who believe that economics deals with a certain *type* of behavior and those who believe that it deals with an *aspect* of all behavior. This split is also found among economists and relates to the manner in which they interpret the roles of the "rationality," "economizing," and "maximization" postulates in model-building.

systems of industrial economies.<sup>2</sup> Prior to the publication of *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*, economic anthropology (to the extent that it dealt with behavioral theory as opposed to being exclusively concerned with material goods and/or subsistence technology) represented a single field of inquiry, with the majority of its practitioners believing that formal economic theory could contribute to anthropology. However, after the publication of this substantivist *magnum opus*, the field underwent a bifurcation into two discrete spheres of discourse. Although several attempts have been made by various scholars to provoke a meaningful dialogue with the substantivists, their critiques have failed to elicit any such exchange of views.<sup>3</sup> Thus the field is presently characterized by a "split-level" dialogue in which the proponents on the two dominant views of economics-in-anthropology are talking past one another and are operating within separate spheres of discourse.

Many anthropologists are still apparently unfamiliar with the scope and content of the critiques of substantivist economics, while substantivist views continue to find expression in the literature without manifesting any noticeable concessions to the arguments of their critics. The present critique is intended to supplement its predecessors by elaborating on the thesis that the substantivists' intransigency concerning the cross-cultural applicability of formal economic theory is a by-product of a romantic ideology rooted in an antipathy toward the "market economy" and an idealization of the "primitive."

## II. A "Paradox" in the Recent Substantivist Literature

In their introduction to *Markets in Africa* Paul Bohannon and George Dalton, two of the most articulate and sophisticated representatives of that group of economic anthropologists who take the writings of Karl Polanyi as their major theoretical point of departure, make an effort to adapt the typology of economies first formulated by Polanyi for the analysis of a series of extinct societies to a body of concrete data from eight societies of contemporary Africa. The alteration of the original Polanyi typology reflects their attempt to cope with the fact that in Africa "those economic activities organized on the market principle are expanding with a concomitant attenuation of redistribution and reciprocity" or that "multicentric economies are in the process of becoming unicentric." Moreover, these two authors commit themselves to the following prognosis: "It seems safe to predict that the process will continue, and that African economies are becoming like our own in the sense that the sectors dominated by the market principle are being enlarged." There is every reason to believe that the trend so succinctly described by

<sup>3</sup>Simon Rottenberg, Edward LeClair, Neil Smelser, and Robbins Burling have written the major critiques.

Bohannon and Dalton for Africa is a process which has world-wide ramifications.

Unfortunately, neither of these substantivist writers deals with the obvious theoretical implications of the discerned developmental trend in empirical economies nor with its significance for future inquiry in economic anthropology. To cope theoretically with this trend would necessarily entail a basic revision of a key tenet in the substantivist ideological system—a concomitant of the simplistic dichotomy between “market” and “primitive-subsistence” economies, namely, the dogma that formal economic theory, being a creature of the market economy, is, *ipso facto*, inapplicable to the analysis of primitive-subsistence economies. While the recent postulation of “subtypes” of primitive-subsistence or non-market economies (i.e., the “marketless” and the “peripheral market” types) can be considered as an attempt by the substantivists to escape from the restrictions imposed by the polar dichotomization of economies, Dalton’s position *vis-à-vis* formal economic theory remains essentially the same as that enunciated in 1961, although he has re-phrased it to fit the new typological accretions.<sup>4</sup> One slight variation on the Polanyi theme which can be detected in the writings of Bohannon and Dalton is a concern with “transitional” or “peasant” economies. Nevertheless, a recent statement by Dalton leads one to believe that what the “market-economy” construct is in Polanyi’s scheme, the “peasant economy” construct is in Dalton’s, i.e., it is postulated as a type of economy studied by those economic anthropologists who successfully utilize concepts and principles from formal economic theory.<sup>5</sup> In other words, it is merely a rhetorical device designed to preserve the integrity of the substantivist ideology.

The specific nature of the substantivist dilemma can now be pieced

<sup>4</sup>For example, he recently criticizes writers who generalize “from what is true in market-integrated economies, to all economies” and rejects two recent studies which argue the case for “economic man” in Africa (i.e., that “Africans respond to material incentives and choose among economic alternatives just as we do”) on the grounds that “. . . all their examples come from type III economies, where Africans—like us—have come to depend for livelihood on market sale (of labor or cash crops). It is interesting to speculate as to how Dalton would deal with recent studies by Salisbury and Pospisil neither of which analyze “type III” economies, but which do point up similarities between actors in market and non-market economies.

<sup>5</sup>A somewhat ironical illustration of the “communication gap” between the two groups of scholars is provided by the fact that immediately following the expression of these views on “peasant economics” by Dalton is a review by Raymond Firth of Pospisil’s *Kapauku Papuan Economy*—a thorough study of the economic life of a highland New Guinea tribe which certainly qualifies as having a “primitive” or “subsistence” economy. Yet Pospisil framed his study in terms of formal economic theory and, as Firth notes in the review, he found that “. . . the Kapauku use sale as the most important form of exchange, and their economic transactions are carried on in a highly individualistic manner, with the profit motive plainly manifest.”

together in the form of a paradox. Confronted with a body of ethnographic data from contemporary African economies, Dalton (along with Bohannon) is forced to admit that they are "becoming more like our own in the sense that the sectors dominated by the market principle are being enlarged," while studies elsewhere have forced him to admit that "small-scale peasant societies . . . can be considered analytically with the concepts and questions from large scale American and European market economies." Dalton persists, however, in reiterating Polanyi's thesis by asserting that those ethnographers who successfully utilize formal economic theory are doing so in peasant or market-dominated economies, not in primitive-subsistence (i.e., marketless or peripheral) economies. This argument implies that the latter type of economy is still the dominant focus of inquiry in economic anthropology, with substantive theory being the only legitimate analytic tool for economic anthropologists. It is undeniable that anthropology can still profit from the study of extinct societies as well as from the study of extant "primitive" societies; and, in the field of economics, substantive theory offers one meaningful approach to such studies. But given the fact that marketless subsistence economies are rapidly disappearing as ethnographic entities, being displaced by market-influenced or -dominated transitional and peasant economies, it seems rather pointless to persist, as Dalton does, in concocting tortured argument in defense of a theory which was designed specifically for the analysis of these moribund types of economies (i.e., substantive economic theory).

### *III. Deduction, Induction and "Economic Man": The Substantivist Position Vis-à-vis the Knight— Herskovits Exchange*<sup>6</sup>

The exchange between Frank Knight and Melville Herskovits is one of the few in the literature between an economist and an anthropologist about the field of economic anthropology which revolves primarily around philosophical issues. Knight's main thesis was essentially that "any intelligent or useful exposition of facts imperatively requires an understanding of principles, while the need for facts in connection with the exposition of principles is far more tenuous." Herskovits' position reflected his indoctrination in the tradition of Boasian inductionism: "My point of view concerning scientific method is that findings must be based on fact, and that to depart from reality is to vitiate the tenability of conclusions." Although this exchange of views occurred a quarter of a century ago, it carries an important message for contemporary anthropo-

<sup>6</sup> While the "economic man" model has been the cause of considerable controversy among economists and between economists and their critics, it continues to serve as a useful heuristic device in economic analysis.

logical inquiry, in general, and for economic anthropology in particular.

Not only has Knight's position in the dialogue been widely misunderstood and slighted by many anthropologists but, even more deplorable, has been their failure to discern the theoretical implications for economic anthropology inherent in Herskovits' change of attitude between 1941 and 1952 when his text *Economic Anthropology* was published. In the exchange with Knight, Herskovits demonstrated an inadequate knowledge of the economic literature which obviously impaired his understanding of the scope and methods of economic theory. This was reflected most vividly in his contemptuousness with regard to the "economic man" construct on the grounds that the available evidence from all over the world indicated that its existence was purely mythical. At this point in his career Herskovits' position *vis-à-vis* the "economic man" was similar to that later expressed by the substantivists. However, this position was substantially modified in the 1952 edition of his text where it is clear that Herskovits had acquired more knowledge of the role of the "economic man" construct in the history of economic analysis, and had achieved greater insight into the importance of deductive reasoning in economic model building.<sup>7</sup>

How can one explain this change in attitude by Herskovits? Does it represent a basic intellectual conversion from "Boasian inductionism" to "Knightian deductionism"? This hypothesis can be rejected as incompatible with the tone and content of his voluminous writings which, until the time of his death, continued to manifest his inductive orientation. Fortunately, Herskovits provides us with two reasons for his change in attitude in the preface to *Economic Anthropology*: (1) new ethnographic data about the economies of non-literate, non-industrial, non-pecuniary societies which convinced him of the universality of the concepts and principles of economic theory; and (2) increased knowledge on his part of the scope and methods of economic theory and of economists' views about economic anthropology. Thus, far from reflecting an intellectual conversion from inductionism to deductionism, Herskovits' attitudinal change was an affirmation of his own inductionist view of social science.

It seems to me that the followers of Polanyi could profit from a re-examination of the Knight-Herskovits exchange and its implications for theory and methodology in economic anthropology. Although they continue to espouse inductionistic canons of social scientific method, the substantivists are, in fact, guilty of a failure to cope with ethnographic and theoretical contributions in economics which contradict many of their own assumptions. Polanyi established a precedent in this regard

<sup>7</sup> Chalk has succinctly delimited two roles which "economic man" has played in the history of economic analysis: (1) as an abstract description of "human nature"; (2) as a heuristic model of human action.

with his terse and unelaborated condemnation of Herskovits' text: "In the field of anthropology, Melville Herskovits' recent work represents a relapse after his pioneering effort of 1940."

#### *IV. The Romantic "Anti-market" Syndrome: The Market as a Universal Bogey*

Underlying and to some extent cross-cutting the major split among students of economic anthropology between those who believe that the difference between Western-type market and primitive-subsistence economies is one of degree, and those who believe it is one of kind (i.e., the substantivists) is a split of another dimension—that between the "Romanticists" and the "Formalists." The Formalists may be characterized as those who focus on abstractions unlimited by time and place, and who are prone to introspection or are synchronically oriented; they are scientific in outlook and mathematical in inclination, favor the deductive mode of inquiry, and are basically analytic in methodology (i.e., lean toward the belief that parts determine the whole). The Romanticists, on the other hand, may be characterized as those who focus on situations limited in time and space, and who are prone to retrospection or are diachronically oriented; they are humanistic in outlook and non-mathematical in inclination, favor the inductive mode of inquiry, and are basically synthetic in methodology (i.e., lean toward the belief that the whole determines its parts). In this section the concern will be to link Polanyi and his followers to the Romanticist tradition and to suggest certain implications of this linkage for economic anthropology.

Eric Wolf has recently described the "Romantic Syndrome" in its anthropological context as follows: "The anthropologist has shown a tendency . . . to construe . . . savage worlds as worlds *sui generis*, to hypostatize them into representatives of pristine designs for living, untouched by the hands of civilization from which he escaped. . . ." Since World War II, according to Wolf, this romantic element in anthropology has diminished in scope, thus he speaks of the "decline of the romantic quest for pristine alternatives." While this trend may be discernible in anthropology as a whole, it does not seem to be dominant in the field of economic anthropology where Polanyi's influence has been essentially a post-war phenomenon and shows no signs of diminution at present. Of course, it has not yet been demonstrated how Polanyi and the substantivists can be categorized as Romanticists. To assist in this task I will turn to a recent article by Stanley Diamond, who is one of the few anthropologists to view anthropology from the standpoint of intellectual history and the sociology of knowledge.

Diamond's thesis is that anthropology falls into the romantic stream of historical knowledge which is part of the "retrospective" tradition

of the Enlightenment—a tradition which found its living laboratory in the Age of Discovery. This tradition consists of “. . . the conscious search in history for a renewed and basic sense of the possibilities in human nature and of culture, not only in response to the fall of feudal ideology but in contrast to the nascent modern realities that were being created by the revolutionary bourgeoisie.” The representative *par excellence* of this tradition was, in Diamond’s opinion, Rousseau, and his characterization of the French social philosopher isolates certain motive forces and intellectual tendencies implicit in Polanyi’s quest for a new thought pattern for modern industrial civilization. Implicit in Polanyi’s writings and inevitably adopted by other substantivist writers is a utopian model of primitive society which minimizes the role of conflict, coupled with a model of man which emphasizes innate altruistic and cooperative propensities while playing down self-interest, aggressiveness, and competitiveness.

In essence, Polanyi’s view of human motivation is that the pursuit of self-interest in the form of material gain and profit is a concomitant of the rise of the “self-regulating” market economy in 19th century Europe and the United States. This development represented the emergence of a new historical type of society since in the “pre-market” situation (which Polanyi invariably equates with primitive society) men were motivated not by selfish propensities for economic gain but by simple, unadulterated subsistence needs. The upshot of this argument is that the motive of material gain or profit is not “natural” to man and is operative only under special circumstances of time and place. In other words, Polanyi views all human behavior prior to the 19th century institutionalization of the “self-regulating” market economy, or outside the market economy context in primitive society, as being devoid of the pursuit of self interest and as being inherently altruistic. Primitive Man, as inferred from Polanyi’s writings, is incapable of acting to secure his own material advantage through the calculated manipulation of social relations.<sup>8</sup>

Polanyi’s model of primitive society is based on two principles of behavior, reciprocity and redistribution, which he posits as ordering the processes of production and distribution in primitive economies. These

<sup>8</sup> A substantial portion of the support which Polanyi provides for this argument is drawn from the writings of Thurnwald, Malinowski, and Aristotle. With regard to the two eminent founders of economic anthropology, their writings—while still stimulating and useful—can no longer be considered authoritative as general texts in the field. Studies in non-market economies such as those by Firth, Salisbury, and Pospisil have documented the proposition that economic relations among “primitive” peoples do involve motivational patterns and rational calculations not unlike those characterizing actors in market economies. With regard to Aristotle, Polanyi tends to minimize this ancient thinker’s role as a cynical and astute observer of human activity as reflected in statements like the following: “. . . all men, or the generality at least, wish what is honorable, but, when tested, choose what is profitable.”

principles are in turn related to the institutional patterns of symmetry and centricity—the former associated with reciprocal economies and the latter with redistributive economies. It is in the explanation of these principles that Polanyi, in effect, idealizes primitive society and sociologizes the economic sector, i.e., contends that the economic system is "submerged" or "embedded" in social organization.<sup>9</sup> Reciprocal systems characterized by symmetry and redistributive systems characterized by centricity are considered as sub-types of the non-market economy in Polanyi's scheme. However, when he compares and contrasts 'primitive,' 'tribal' or 'subsistence' economies (i.e., non-market economies) with the 'market-economy' type, he always utilizes the reciprocal economy construct.<sup>10</sup>

The following model of a market or exchange economy can be inferred from Polanyi's writings: The dominant principle of behavior is higgling-haggling (i.e., bargaining to arrive at a mutually satisfactory price) motivated by a desire for personal gain or profit; this inevitably involves mutual antagonism and ultimately provokes latent hostilities into overt expression and/or creates anxiety. In contrast, the inferred model of a non-market (i.e., reciprocal) economy is as follows: The dominant principle of behavior is reciprocity (i.e., the process of mutual give and take guided by a series of set equivalencies) motivated by generosity; this inevitably involves a mutually cooperative relationship which ultimately allays latent hostilities and creates solidarity.<sup>11</sup> While conflict is built into the market model, the reciprocal or non-market model precludes it.

At least two important relationships are glossed over in Polanyi's non-market economy model: (1) the norm of reciprocity is not incompatible with the self-interest or aggressiveness postulate; (2) the principle of generosity in a reciprocal economy can create conflict as well as contribute to solidarity, and can also be manipulated to secure an advantage over one's fellows. In other words, "laying on obligations of reciprocity"

<sup>9</sup> Polanyi inverts the approach of the classical economists since he is critical of them for subordinating "society" to "economy."

<sup>10</sup> Polanyi tended to equate "simplicity" with "temporal priority" in his discussions of social and economic institutions. Juxtaposed are "primitive"—a term which has no necessary temporal connotation, and "archaic"—a term which does possess such a connotation. Elsewhere Polanyi juxtaposed "early" and "primitive." One can never be certain what the societal referent is in many of Polanyi's assertions about social and economic institutions, that is, he tended to confuse "contemporary" primitive societies and "extinct" societies of the historical past.

<sup>11</sup> That "primitive communism" is still very much a live issue for the substantivists and is reconcilable with their belief system can be inferred from Dalton's recent note which begins euphemistically with the statement: "There is a kernel of truth in the notion of 'primitive communism.'" Polanyi also flirts with this notion throughout his writings.



in a reciprocal economy is functionally equivalent to the selfish seeking of gain or profit in a market economy. Granted the fact that exchange at fluctuating prices in a market economy involves antagonism and that the social context of interaction is more impersonal than that in a reciprocal economy, it must also be recognized that failure to reciprocate within the period stipulated or anticipated in a reciprocal economy usually produces conflict.<sup>12</sup> At the very least, failure to reciprocate is dysfunctional for embryonic reciprocity contracts. In view of these relationships the "fount of solidarity" postulate in the extrapolated model of Polanyi's non-market economy is untenable.

Polanyi contends, as a final proposition in his ideological scheme, that the market economy guided by its "ideological promoters," the Classical economists, transformed the natural and human substance (i.e., land and labor) of 19th century Western society into commodities, thereby projecting "hunger" (fear of going without life's necessities) and "gain" (profit expectation) as economic motives into the saddle to ride man. These two motives, working together, served as the propelling forces in the institutionalization of the market economy. That Polanyi views this "transformation" as degrading to man, and the market system which produced it as the principal nemesis of human dignity and civilization is apparent from statements like the following: "Economic motives reigned supreme in a world of their own, and the individual was made to act on them under pain of being trodden under foot by the juggernaut market." Or, in still more dramatic prose:

This latter field (i.e., economy) has been "separated out" of society as the realm of hunger and gain. Our animal dependence upon food has been bared and the naked fear of starvation permitted to run loose. Our humiliating enslavement to the "material" which all human culture is designed to mitigate, was deliberately made more rigorous . . .

Only since the market was permitted to grind the human fabric into the featureless uniformity of selenic erosion has man's institutional creativeness been in abeyance. No wonder that his social imagination shows signs of fatigue.

These are undeniably the words of a Romanticist in the Rousseauian tradition who feels alienated by an industrial civilization in which the division of labor is rejected as paralyzing, in which mechanism is dominant over organism and bureaucracy stifles individual spontaneity, and where life itself is perceived as routinized tedium. Like Rousseau, Polanyi does not advocate a return to any historically specific primitive

<sup>12</sup> Lévi-Strauss has documented several cases among the Nambikuara in which "chiefs" were forced to relinquish their statuses because of their failure to be generous in the provisioning of their "companions." This crisis is always accompanied by a great deal of hostility and aggressiveness in the form of verbal abuse, threatening gestures, etc.; and the process itself threatens the existence of the Nambikuara band as an ongoing system.

condition, but he warns that unless present trends are reversed, contemporary man will be unable to "recover the elasticity, the imaginative wealth and power, of his savage endowment."

### *V. A Critique of Substantivist Views of Formal Economic Theory*

In what is generally recognized as the most erudite and authoritative study of the development of economic science, Joseph Schumpeter delimits three sub-areas within the discipline: (1) economic analysis; (2) political economy; (3) economic thought. He defines economic analysis as "the intellectual effort that men have made in order to understand economic phenomena" or "the analytic or scientific aspects of economic thought." By a system of political economy he means "an exposition of a comprehensive set of economic policies that its author advocates on the strength of certain unifying (normative) principles such as the principles of economic liberalism, of socialism, etc." Finally, economic thought in Schumpeter's terms is defined as "the sum total of all the opinions and desires concerning economic subjects, especially concerning public policy bearing upon these subjects that, at any given time and place, float in the public mind."<sup>13</sup>

The immediate relevance of these distinctions to a critique of substantive economics becomes clear only when we realize that Schumpeter, who fully accepted the idea of the pervasiveness of ideological bias in the history of economics, nevertheless suggested that "economic analysis" was less susceptible to the interests and attitudes of the market place than either "political economy" or "economic thought." Economic analysis alone displays a unique property of "scientific progress" which, according to Schumpeter, is analogous to "technological progress in the extraction of teeth between the times of, say J. S. Mill and our own." By failing to distinguish between these three aspects of economics Polanyi and his followers necessarily ignore two factors which are crucial to a proper understanding of the history of the discipline, as well as its present nature and scope: first, that when one looks at the content of the tool-kit of economic analysis, he discovers many conceptual tools that are ideologically neutral; second, that there are concepts or theories that, though they can be shown to be actually neutral, acquire a putative ideological importance because people erroneously believe that they are relevant to their ideologies.

Examining substantivist writings with Schumpeter's discussion as a point of departure, the following conclusions emerge: (1) Insofar as an

<sup>13</sup> In Schumpeter's terms the "public mind" is never an undifferentiated or homogeneous entity but is the result of the class and group structure of a given community.

attempt is made to document a historical and institutional linkage between economic theory (i.e., economic analysis) and the "market economy," the end result is the documentation of a linkage between a *particular system* of political economy (i.e., economic liberalism) and the *19th century European* market economy; (2) Generalizations regarding the historical and institutional limitations of formal economic theory refer to the latter as it stood in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, thus ignoring subsequent refinements, modifications and new additions to the science.

For example, in his role as chief theoretical spokesman for the substantivist approach to economics in anthropology, George Dalton sets out to "describe those special organizational features of Western economy which formal economic theory was created to analyze." The only post-Classical economists singled out in Dalton's presentation are Jevons, Menger, Clark, and Marshall who were the founders of the Neoclassical tradition in economic analysis. Dalton fails to demonstrate precisely how the theoretical and conceptual contributions of these economists are products of and solely applicable to the market institution, nor does he bother to consider contributions to the economic literature subsequent to those of the founders of Neoclassical theory. Few would deny that this theory has been formulated with the Western market-economy model as a reference point but, as Schumpeter pointed out, many of the conceptual tools so formulated will be ideologically neutral and their conditioning by the interests and attitudes of the market will be tenuous at best. Moreover, the assertion that this theory is inapplicable to the analysis of non-market economies is verifiable only by empirical test—a procedure which the substantivists have never taken seriously.

Even if the substantivists provided an airtight case for the historical and institutional limitations of Classical and early Neoclassical theories, it would be stretching their arguments beyond reasonable bounds to then assert that "all economic theory" is so limited; Dalton's use of the early Neoclassical economists as typical representatives of economic theory is tantamount to using Weber, Simmel, and Durkheim (for example) as typifying sociological theory. To carry this analogy one step further, it is tantamount to arguing that because sociological theory was formulated to analyze complex institutions and behaviors of Western industrial civilization (which is essentially correct) it is, *ipso facto*, inapplicable to the analysis of simple, non-industrial societies. Such an attitude implicitly condemns to the anthropological wastebasket a whole host of penetrating studies of simple societies which utilize a conceptual scaffolding derived from sociological theory. It seems to me that the burden of proof rests with the substantivists to demonstrate that what has been done with recognized success by anthropologists with sociological (and one might add, psychological) theory cannot also be done with economic theory.

Economists and economic analysis have, by and large, adapted to changing intellectual and institutional conditions so that what was true of them a hundred, fifty, or even ten years ago is not true of them today. This is why one has difficulty in viewing current expositions of economic theory in terms of the substantivist interpretation of it. Schumpeter has noted the following crucial fact about the history of economics: "... the subject matter of economics is itself a unique historical process so that, to a large extent, the economics of different epochs deal with different sets of facts and problems." Economic analysis copes with change in its subject matter through the "filiation of scientific ideas" which Schumpeter defines as the "process by which men's efforts to understand economic phenomena produce, improve, and pull down analytic statements in an unending sequence." To overlook this central process in the history of economics, as the substantivists from Polanyi to Dalton do, is to distort contemporary economic analysis and to arbitrarily deny its status as a science.

The substantivists are unanimous in agreeing that the distinction between the "formal" and "substantive" meanings of economic is the greatest single conceptual contribution of Polanyi. Dalton, for example, acknowledges his indebtedness to Polanyi for "his illuminating distinction between the two meanings of economic." Even Robbins Burling who goes on to criticize certain implications of the semantic dichotomy refers to "a long needed distinction between economics in the substantive sense of the provision of material goods, and in the formal sense of rationalizing calculation or 'economizing.'" <sup>14</sup>

The only dissenting view of the Polanyi distinction which I have found in the anthropological literature is by LeClair in his formidable critique of the substantivist position when he asks "why there is a 'felt need' for a substantive definition of economics." His curiosity over this point is shared by me, especially in view of the fact that economists have expended as much effort in writing about the definition and scope of economics as in regard to any other single issue, and that an enormous body of literature focused on this topic has been totally by-passed in

<sup>14</sup> Burling's attitude is puzzling since he is one of a handful of anthropologists who demonstrate an intimate acquaintance with Lionel Robbins' seminal essay on *The Nature and Significance of Economic Science*, in which the opening chapter on "The Subject Matter of Economics" incorporates separate sections devoted respectively to "The 'Materialist's' Definition of Economics" and "The 'Scarcity' Definition of Economics." Although Polanyi accuses Robbins and others of committing the "economic fallacy" (i.e., artificially identifying the economy with its market form) and further asserts that Robbins' essay "... fatefully distorted the problem" (of the study of the place occupied by the economy in human society), I fail to understand how Polanyi's distinction between the "formal" and "substantive" meanings of economic adds anything but confusion to Robbins' concise discussion.

substantivist discussions.<sup>15</sup> LeClair, however, assumes in his critique that Polanyi and Dalton, in making their distinction between the “two meanings of economic,” are indeed paralleling comparable distinctions made by economists. But the failure of the substantivists to consciously tie in their discussion with the “definition and scope” debate in economic discourse raises serious doubts in my mind concerning the “meaning” of their “two meanings.”<sup>16</sup>

Polanyi did not separate out the two meanings as a simple intellectual exercise; his aim was “to determine the meaning that can be attached with consistency to the term ‘economic’ in the social sciences.” Given this goal, Polanyi’s lack of reference to the economic literature relating to this problem is even more baffling. It is not surprising, then, that many complications arise in the course of his discussion, ranging from his doctrinaire denial of the universality of rational choice in man’s economic life to the rationale underlying the “two meanings” distinction itself. Polanyi’s statements of the issue enables us to separate a series of traits, and to arrange them in terms of a dichotomous typology in which the polar opposites are “substantive” and “formal.”<sup>17</sup>

<i>Substantive</i>	<i>Formal</i>
1. derives from fact	1. derives from logic
2. implies neither choice nor insufficiency of means	2. set of rules referring to choice between alternative uses of insufficient means
3. power of gravity	3. power of syllogism
4. laws of nature	4. laws of mind

<sup>15</sup> Writings by economists on the “scope and method” of economics can be traced back at least to James Mill and through the writings of his son, John Stuart Mill, to John Neville Keynes, Lionel Robbins, T. W. Hutchinson, Frank Knight, Joseph Schumpeter, and down to such current writers as Kenneth Boulding and Benjamin Higgins.

<sup>16</sup> Walter Neale, in a recent attempt by a substantivist to clarify some of the ambiguity associated with the concept of “economic,” does relate Polanyi’s substantive definition to others in the economic literature. After citing Alfred Marshall’s definition which focuses on the “material requisites of well-being,” he admits that portions of it are “close to, if not identical with, the substantive definition . . .” However, Neale unfortunately remains silent about the criticisms of Rottenberg, Smelser, LeClair and Burling and, in other respects, does not deviate from the Polanyi line. Thus, the “split-level” dialogue is perpetuated as the Polanyites continue to exchange notes within their own closed sphere of discourse, without directly acknowledging or attempting to answer the views of their critics.

<sup>17</sup> Max Weber made the “formal-substantive” distinction in his discussion of “The Formal and Substantive Rationality of Economic Action.” However, the extent to which Polanyi used Weber’s discussion as a point of departure for his own is unclear. What is clear is that Weber, unlike Polanyi, never asserted that “economic interest” or the “pursuit of gain” was absent in non-market (i.e., pre-capitalistic or traditional) societies.

These two meanings obfuscate the nature of the relationship between economic theory as the science of economics and "economy" or "economic facts," which is no different than that between any science and its subject matter. It expresses in semantic terms what is essentially a relationship between phenomena of separate epistemological statuses. To obscure the relationship between economic theory and empirical reality is to place yet another artificial barrier between economists and anthropologists which, by exacerbating the current communication gap between these two sets of scholars, can only serve to impede meaningful research in the field of economic anthropology.

Given Polanyi's sentiments regarding the price-regulated market economy, coupled with his attempt to set the historical and institutional limitations of formal economic theory, it follows that only the "substantive meaning of economic" can yield the concepts required by the social sciences for an investigation of all the empirical economies of the past and present. Simon Rottenberg has pointed out that Polanyi and other substantivists have examined the conventional assumptions of economic theory seeking to ascertain whether these have empirical counterparts in primitive economies, but warns that the "significant question is not whether real world duplicates can be found for the assumptions, but whether real-world observed experience duplicates theoretically derived predictions." Any careful reader of the substantivist literature must agree with Rottenberg that "the door to this area of inquiry was foreclosed by prejudgement."<sup>18</sup>

The substantivist attempt to delimit the boundaries within which economic theory proves ineffective as an analytical tool depends for its success or failure upon their handling of the "economizing" and

<sup>18</sup> Neil J. Smelser in a major critical review article of *Trade and Market in the Early Empires* describes the "two meanings of economic" and then proceeds to suggest that this distinction and the inferences drawn from it come "... perilously close to throwing out the baby of *general economic analysis* with the *culture-bound market orientation* of traditional economics." To compound the confusion created by the "two meanings" discussion, Polanyi devises a bogey construct in the form of a "compound concept of the two meanings." According to him this concept is both current and past, popular and scientific in usage. In this discussion, Polanyi switches his frame of reference from political economy and economic analysis and seems, instead, to be talking about something comparable to Schumpeter's "economic thought" or about "sociological analysis" (he cites Pareto, Durkheim, Weber and Parsons). Pervading the substantivist literature is this ambiguity concerning the intended referents of terms which are used loosely and interchangeably, e.g., "formal economics," "formal economic theory," "economic analysis," "formal meaning of economic," and "economic theory." Even when the context seems to indicate that the referent is "economic analysis," it is obviously not referring to that set of skills which contemporary economists practice, but to a set of assumptions and principles related to the Classical economists or to the founders of Neoclassical economics.

"scarcity" postulates.<sup>19</sup> According to Polanyi, economic theory is analytically useful only in those economies in which economizing acts (i.e., sequences of rational choice in the allocation or use of resources) induced by scarcity situations are institutionalized. He argues that the presence or absence of scarcity is invariably a question of fact. Although frequently denying the universal relevance of scarcity as a conditioning factor in economic action, the substantivists have never, to my knowledge, provided an ethnographic example of an empirical economy in which scarcity was without implications for economic decision-making (i.e., economizing). Nor, as Smelser has observed, have they formulated a counter-postulate which better serves economic analysis than that based on the notion of scarcity. As is so often the case in substantivist theorizing, the sole evidence which is offered in support of the series of propositions relating economizing, scarcity, and the applicability of economic theory is verbal acrobatics as illustrated in the following statement by Polanyi: "While the rules governing such acts (of economizing) are universal, the extent to which the rules are applicable to a definite economy depends upon whether or not that economy is, in actual fact, a sequence of such acts."

Economists reject the thesis, developed by Polanyi and preserved by Dalton, that scarcity is solely a function of social organization. The basic assumption which economic analysis makes about the physical world is that the resources which it provides for human utilization are scarce (i.e., limited in relation to the demand for them). It is because of this scarcity that goods have to be shared out among the individual members of a social group, and it is the role of an economic system to perform this "sharing out" task. From the economist's point of view, if there were no scarcity and consequently no need for goods to be shared out among individuals, there would be no economic system. While economists view scarcity as an inherent condition in any human situation, they consider it to have relevance in economic theory only when associated with the concept of "economic good" (i.e., in order to get more of a given commodity, a quantity of some other commodity must be relinquished). Since a good is economically scarce only in relation to the demand for it, it follows that "scarcity always means scarce in relation to demand." In economic theory, then, scarcity is a relative concept which

<sup>19</sup> In the economic literature to "economize" means to arrange, constitute, organize or turn to best account. The act of "economizing" implies two things: (1) a standard for measuring needs so that the greater or more highly valued may be distinguished from the lesser or less highly valued; together with (2) an acceptable method for apportioning time, energy, and resources in accordance with the results of this measurement. The mutual interdependence of "choice" and "standard of comparison" and the universality of these two minimal components of "economizing" have been expressed with great insight by Heimann.

reflects the interplay of biosocial (i.e., wants and the resources of time and energy required to satisfy them) and ecological (i.e., physical and natural environmental) determinants.

In recent years George Dalton has emerged as the most ardent and articulate spokesman for substantivist economics in anthropology. His influence on current thinking in economic anthropology among American anthropologists is substantial, if not dominant. Yet anyone who has followed the trend of controversy in this field will have realized that the persuasiveness of Dalton's arguments is a direct concomitant of his failure to treat adequately the criticisms which have periodically been directed against the substantivist approach. For example, in his 1961 article which is essentially an attempt to clarify certain ambiguities in earlier substantivist writings, Dalton devotes only one short paragraph in reply to Rottenberg's incisive critique. Furthermore, he selectively limits his comments to only one of several issues raised by this critic which he dismisses arbitrarily as follows: "The use of formal price theory concepts such as 'inelastic demand' in reference to primitive economies indicates an implicit market orientation: the prejudgment of economic organization by way of an *a priori* assumption that market structure—or its functional equivalent—exists universally." In other words, Dalton is simply echoing Polanyi's ideological argument against the universal applicability of formal economic theory. His treatment of Smelser's major critique is even less adequate than that of Rottenberg's, since he alludes to it only once and that is to cite a minor point on which Smelser happens to agree with the substantivist position. One sentence from Smelser's critique places Dalton's evasiveness in proper perspective: "It is as illegitimate to try to force a physical or material bias on all economic activity as it is to impose a fully-developed market analysis on all types of economy; both operations involve an ill-advised reductionism."

In his discussion of economic theory Dalton refers to "the textbook homily that man's material wants are insatiable, a dictum that often implies the immutability of genetic impulse" providing still another example of the substantivist penchant for overstatement. If economists really believed that human wants were insatiable they would furnish the rationale for discontinuing one of their own major intellectual activities, namely, the study of consumer behavior—that branch of micro-economic theory devoted to the study of want-satisfaction. Indeed, many economists define their discipline as dealing with that aspect of the human activity of want-satisfaction in which the problem of scarcity of means is paramount. As one economist expresses it: "The satisfaction of wants constitutes a major segment of human activity and economics is occupied with a study of this segment." Economists, then, do not hold to the simplistic dictum which Dalton attributes to them but believe, more realistically, that in any given situation man's wants will be more



numerous than the means available for satisfying them; but that once choice as to the utilization of scarce means is exercised those wants which are deemed most satisfying or as having the highest marginal utility will be satisfied. Among other things, Dalton has chosen not to consider the important role which the time factor plays in economic analysis. The unqualified proposition that wants are insatiable would be true in economic theory only in a hypothetical situation in which the time factor was held constant or assumed to be unlimited. However, in economic model-building the limitation of the time factor is crucial to the analysis of most economic problems, as well as to the predictability of the model.

Wilbert E. Moore, a sociologist who is skeptical of the applicability of economic analysis to non-market situations, has argued that "the essential difficulty in the concepts (of economic theory) as applied to primitive or agrarian societies is that their 'operational definition' is not the same as in a market system." He further suggests that discussions of "primitive" or "peasant" economics commonly employ concepts that are essentially metaphorical, being borrowed from economic theory but without precise application where the assumptions of economic theory are inoperative (which, he neglects to mention, can only be determined by empirically testing the derivative principles and models). Moore's argument, like those of the substantivists, seems to minimize the inherent plasticity and logical integrity of the assumptions and concepts of economic theory which, after all, are ultimately derived from one simple, yet heuristically powerful, proposition: "The problem of maximizing satisfactions through the utilization of 'scarce means'—the need to economize in the broadest sense of the term—derives from the basic fact of the existence of wants in excess of the capacity to produce." Or, to state the proposition differently: Most members of every discrete human group have economically relevant wants that exceed the procurement means available to them. In band societies, simple tribal and peasant societies, these economically relevant wants lie predominantly, though not exclusively, in the subsistence realm; while in more complex societies such wants exist both within and beyond the bounds of the subsistence sphere.

In the development of economic principles through the use of models, any assumption is considered valid if it conveniently simplifies analysis, if it is not incompatible with other necessary assumptions and if it either conforms to reality, or can subsequently be discarded without making it impossible to revise accordingly the generalizations reached. This is the rationale underlying the economist's "method of successive approximations" to reality which is the core tool of economic theorizing and the *conditio sine qua non* of model-building. Economists, on the whole, are willing to sacrifice reality in making these assumptions in

order to benefit heuristically from their simplicity. Given a set of simple assumptions about human behavior, the economist is better equipped to maneuver within the realm of deductive analysis. In effect, simple postulates relating to choice of means and ends (e.g., "scarcity," "economizing," "maximization") enable the economist to predict economic action in accordance with the canons of logical reasoning. The strength, not the weakness, of economic theory lies in its reliance upon such simple assumptions.

Scientific knowledge of the external world is not achieved through doctrinaire or *a priori* rejections of basic assumptions simply because they fail to conform to certain preconceived notions of "reality." The successful practitioner of any science tests the validity of his operating assumptions indirectly by applying the models and principles derived from them to the analysis of concrete situations. He only begins to question the validity of these assumptions when and if the derivative models and principles fail to explain empirical phenomena. Dalton and the substantivists are deviating from the accepted canons of scientific inquiry when they argue for the *a priori* rejection of the basic assumptions and derivative models of economic theory. Their position is made even more untenable when they persist in advocating such doctrinaire views in open defiance of a growing body of ethnographic literature which provides ample evidence that concepts and models from economic theory do have relevance in the analysis of various types of non-market economies.

## VI. Recapitulation and Conclusions

Karl Polanyi and his followers, the substantivist school of economic anthropology, are unanimous in their judgment that economic theory—the skills practiced by the social scientists known as economists—is inapplicable to the study of "non-market" or "primitive" economies. They further assert that a new approach to the study of economics, substantive and inductive in orientation, must be developed to provide a cross-culturally valid methodology from which a "general economic theory" may eventually derive. In the preceding sections of this paper it has been demonstrated that these substantivist views emanate from an "anti-market" ideology which considers formal economic theory as a creature of the 19th century market economy and its putative intellectual apologists, the Classical economists. It was further suggested that substantivist beliefs rest upon a gross oversimplification of the history of Western economic thought as well as of the nature and content of contemporary economic analysis. Finally, on the basis of a critical analysis of the substantivist distinction between the "two meanings of economic" and their views *vis-à-vis* certain basic postulates of formal

economic theory, it was suggested that their extreme conclusions derive from fallacious logic, pseudo-inductionism, and are ultimately reducible to the status of metaphysical (i.e., untestable) propositions.

There are many aspects of the substantivist approach to economics, both positive and negative, which were not treated in this paper. The effort here has been to focus on the relationship between economic theory and anthropology and, in keeping with this aim, the discussion has been selectively limited to those aspects of the substantive approach which bear directly upon this focal concern. It should now be apparent that urging the total rejection of economic theory in anthropological inquiry is a position which is justifiable only in ideological terms and by dependence upon arbitrary chains of doctrinaire assertions. The selective use of models and concepts taken from the formidable tool-kit of economic theory in the analysis of non-market economies does not necessarily involve an "*a priori* assumption that market structure—or its functional equivalent—exists universally" as Dalton would have us believe. This is an unwarranted assertion generated by the "anti-market" ideology and, in making it, Dalton conveniently ignores key studies in economic anthropology which demonstrate conclusively that many of the principles and concepts of economic theory, given certain necessary but not critical modifications, do hold up in the analysis of non-market economic systems.<sup>20</sup>

One proponent of the substantivist approach, visualizing the economic anthropology of the future, advocates that "the leading ideas that have to be developed further are those of Malinowski, Thurnwald, Benedict, DuBois and Mead, and not those of the economic theorists." For economic anthropologists to follow this advice would be building upon our weakest links with the two great founders of economic anthropology and, consequently, would stunt the growth of the discipline. From my perspective, a science of economic anthropology will emerge only as a "hybrid discipline"—representing the fusion of two trends: the study of economic theory by anthropologists (admirably begun by

<sup>20</sup> Salisbury in his analysis of a New Guinea highland tribe, the Siane, though unable to identify any discrete empirical entity which he could label "economy" and without being able to quantify economic data in terms of the usual measuring rod of money, was nevertheless able to conduct an elaborate and penetrating study of what he calls "the economic aspects of Siane behavior" (i.e., those aspects in which there is allocation of scarce means, based on a rational calculation in terms of quantities of goods and services, and in which goods are produced, exchanged or consumed). Not only did Salisbury find several traditional Western economic concepts useful in his analysis, but his formulation of categories of goods among the Siane in terms of demand elasticities is a convincing demonstration that economic concepts taken from "price theory" (which in the substantivist scheme is the most market-economy-biased aspect of economic theory) can serve as valuable analytic tools in the study of non-market economies.

Firth more than 25 years ago and continuing today in the work of anthropologists like Salisbury and Belshaw), and the development of an anthropological perspective by economists (begun by scholars like Goodfellow and evident today in the work of development economists like E. E. Hagen, W. A. Lewis, B. Hoselitz, and B. S. Yamey). To a large extent, the economic anthropology of the future will be focused on development—the peasantization of the primitive and the *proletarianization* of the peasant. Regardless of his ideological or philosophical commitments, the contemporary anthropologist must adapt to one ineluctable condition: the human populations among which he must work are not static—change of revolutionary proportions is ubiquitous; norms, attitudes, and behaviors of the Western market economy are rapidly being disseminated throughout the world's culture areas by the many institutions of neo-colonialism.

Given this situation, the eventual emergence of a general theory of comparative economic systems depends largely upon how well economics can be anthropologized. The infusion of cultural relativism into the economist's world-view is long overdue; his discipline is the last stronghold of cultural parochialism and ivory-tower disdain of socio-cultural realities in the social sciences. Nevertheless, any *general theory* of comparative economics must ultimately come from the sophisticated model-building skills of the economist applied to data collected by systematic ethnographers who are aware of the relevant categories and conceptual tools of economic analysis. To conceive, as the substantivists do, of economics as subsistence activity plus material want satisfaction, and as being comprehensible exclusively in inductive terms, is to preclude the formulation of a viable science of comparative economic systems.<sup>21</sup>

It has been suggested that the primitive world which for so long has dominated the anthropological imagination is inevitably on the wane, being displaced by the world of the peasant and the proletarian. The substantivist position, rooted as it is in a profound resentment of this transition, unavoidably leads its adherents to a narrow and restricted

<sup>21</sup> The vision of a "science of comparative economic systems" does not necessarily involve a commitment to the formulation of a cross-culturally valid "general" or "grand" theory of economic behavior. Such a theory may never be developed and, if and when it is, the logico-mathematical skills which are part of the economist's toolkit will inevitably play a dominant role in its formulation. Given this situation, anthropologists should focus their skills on more concrete and readily achievable tasks. Currently, one of the most complex, least understood, and most potentially fruitful problem-areas in economic anthropology is the study of so-called "peasant" or "intermediate" societies. It is in the study of such societies that an "empirically powerful body of middle range theory" will be developed in economic anthropology and it is here that the anthropologist can perform his most significant role as a student of economic behavior.

role conception of the anthropologist in economic inquiry. In the words of Dalton: "Economists are concerned with inducing real output increases, anthropologists with reducing the social decimation inherent in rapid institutional departure from indigenous forms . . . One must start with ethnoeconomic analysis—with Malinowski, not Ricardo—in order to choose those transformation paths to industrialization which entail only the unavoidable social costs." Apparently, Dalton conceives of the anthropologist's role *vis-à-vis* the economist as analogous to that of the social worker *vis-à-vis* the sociologist. While one may sympathize with Dalton's sentiments on philosophical grounds, it is time for anthropologists to realize that the either/or ultimatum which he poses (i.e., Malinowski or Ricardo) is not the choice upon which the development of a science of economic anthropology depends. Surely, a more promising point of departure is from the writings of those economists who have made contributions to anthropological theory (e.g., J. S. Berliner) and others (e.g., W. A. Lewis; B. Higgins; B. Hoselitz; E. E. Hagen) who have begun to cope in theoretical terms with the insights of Thurnwald, Malinowski and their present anthropological counterparts; and, finally, from the work of anthropologists like Melville Herskovits, Raymond Firth, Richard Salisbury, Manning Nash, Robbins Burling and others who have moved well beyond the contributions of Ricardo in their study of the literature of economic analysis. In conclusion, I can only repeat the words which Herskovits chose to express his vision of the future of economic anthropology: "It is my hope that the future will see further analysis of the points taken up here, so that the science of comparative economics may eventually emerge as a structure based on a foundation that is equally solid in its anthropological and economic postulates."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Since this article was written, three publications have appeared which are of immediate relevance to my critique of Polanyi and the substantivist approach, and which should be commented on briefly here. First, Dalton has presented us with a comprehensive laudatory exposition of Polanyi's contribution to economic anthropology in which he makes the following revealing observations about his mentor: "The qualities that made him a brilliant lecturer also made him a difficult writer. His passionate commitment and enormous learning drew large numbers of students to his lectures, several of whom made his research interests their own. . . . Indeed, the contagion is spreading. . . . But what was forceful, lucid, and articulate in the lecture hall sometimes became hyperbole and polemic in print. A sympathetic friend describes Polanyi's writing style as a stiletto set in the far-end of a battering ram." Regrettably, those of us who were not able to experience personal contact with Polanyi must form our impressions of his thought by examining the "hyperbole and polemic in print." If Dalton's sentiments are prophetic of the future course of economic anthropology, then Polanyi's views are indeed destined to be institutionalized under the aegis of a coalition of intransigent academic sophists. Hopefully, my critique will prove to be an effective antidote to the spread of the Polanyi-generated "contagion" in anthro-

polity by encouraging the replacement of "sympathy" for the cause of this charismatic figure with an objective and logical analysis of his ideas about economics.

Second, Bohannan and Dalton have recently published an obituary of Polanyi, who died on April 23, 1964, which includes a brief review of his scholarly contributions and also provides some interesting biographical data which, it seems to me, further substantiates my treatment of Polanyi as a romanticist and ideologist. At the close of their tribute, we are reminded by these authors that "anthropology and economic history are fortunate to have had such a meteor flash through their skies." The position I have attempted to develop in my critique is that the time has now come for anthropologists to sift through the cinders deposited by this "flashing meteor" to determine the extent of their "pyritic" content, so to speak. In this "sifting-out" process anthropologists would do well to keep in mind Joan Robinson's observation that "metaphysical statements are not without content" and ". . . express a point of view and formulate feelings which are a guide to conduct." Moreover, as she goes on to point out, "metaphysical propositions also provide a quarry from which hypotheses can be drawn. They do not belong to the realm of science and yet they are necessary to it. Without them we would not know what it is that we want to know. . . ." Given, then, what I hope is a convincing demonstration of the metaphysical and ideological nature of substantivist thought, this does not justify abandoning their views completely in future anthropological inquiry. What my critique is intended to do is (1) to clarify the ideological underpinnings of the substantive approach to economics, and (2) to establish limits on its applicability to the study of economic problems in a rapidly changing world. The critique is not intended to promote either an uncritical rejection of substantive theory or an uncritical acceptance of formal theory. Rather, I hope that it encourages anthropologists to recognize the possibilities, as well as the limitations, of both types of theories, so that they may be more critical in the application of both to future studies in economic anthropology.

Third and, in my opinion, more significant for the future course of inquiry in economic anthropology, is the appearance of Belshaw's eloquent and comprehensive introduction to the field. This book should convince even the most intransigent opponents of formal economic theory of the untenability of their position *vis-à-vis* its non-applicability to the study of primitive and peasant economies.

# SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

IF THE STUDY of societal structure is the focus and core of social anthropology, it is really no less important to a good number of scholars who identify themselves as cultural anthropologists. To some extent the anthropological study of social organization, particularly the systems of kinship, is an American invention associated with Lewis Henry Morgan; the study of political organization is a traditional European malady the roots of which go back into classical antiquity. Actually, while interest in political theory has always been a feature of anthropological work, problems of sanction and law, social control and government, have only recently attracted extensive anthropological specialization.

Political organization is really a subdivision of the more comprehensive category of structured human relationships known as social organization. The readings which follow give only a sample of the field, and many kinds of inquiry and certain types of problems are entirely omitted. We have not even included a specimen of the monographic treatment of social organization accorded a particular society. So varied is the subject matter and its approaches that a single example representative of all does not exist.

Instead, the selections deal generally and comparatively with some of the major institutions of human society. Beginning with the family we move into larger and larger social realms until we reach the state. The selections do not stress controversy (as is the case elsewhere in this book), but this is not to be taken as a sign of agreement.

## 16 The Social Life of Monkeys, Apes and Primitive Men



Marshall D. Sahlins

THE VERY TITLE OF THIS ESSAY IS ANATHEMA TO MANY ANTHROPOLOGISTS, yet its formulation was quite deliberate. To juxtapose primitive society and the groupings formed by various non-human primates seems, on the one hand, the worst kind of pejorative classification (though the reader will discover that, in fact, Sahlins concludes that human society is qualitatively different from all others). On the other hand, the attempt to understand the relationship between primate and human social groupings seems to violate the autonomy of culture as a realm of phenomena (see II:4).

Yet the problem tackled below is an old one. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many statements were made about the nature of "original" human society, particularly about mating and the family. Without exception, these hypotheses were found untenable in the light of research but the void created by the annihilation of old speculations was not filled by the presentation of new theories.

The article which follows surveys the results of research on primates

SOURCE: This paper, a version of which was originally presented at a joint session of the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association in 1957, was in the first edition of these *Readings* and appeared simultaneously in *Human Biology*, Vol. 31:1 (1959).

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*and among primitives. It furnishes a modest but substantial basis for understanding contemporary ecological approaches to problems of analysis of the simpler human societies, but its data and conclusions about primate society should be compared with those available in the more recent summary presented in I:20.*

### 1. Introduction

This study compares societies of infrahuman primates with the most rudimentary of documented human social systems. The objectives are to describe general trends in primate social organization leading to human society, and to delineate the major advances of the latter, cultural society, over precultural society.

For comparative materials, we rely on field studies of monkey and ape social behavior, supplementary observations of these animals in captivity, and ethnographic accounts of simple hunters and gatherers. The quality and quantity of published studies of free ranging subhuman primate societies do not provide comfortable support for weighty generalizations. Aside from the anecdotal literature, we have only Carpenter's accounts of spider monkeys, rhesus, howling monkeys, and gibbons; Nissen's chimpanzee material; Zuckerman's observations of baboons (perhaps biased by his captivity studies); the as yet incomplete reports on the Japanese monkey and some peripheral notes on the African red-tailed monkey by Haddow, and on the gorilla by Schwab. *Considering this, our interpretations of subhuman primate social behavior are entirely provisional.* The data on primitive food gatherers are more abundant. We include in our comparison the following primitive societies: Australian Aborigines, Tasmanians, Semang, Andamanese, Philippine and Congo pygmies, Bushmen, Eskimo, Great Basin Shoshoni, Naskapi, Ona and Yahgan. It is assumed that these societies parallel early cultural society in general features. This is simply an assumption of order and regularity. The technologies and low productivity of modern hunters and gatherers resemble the archaeologically revealed productive systems of early cultures. Granting that a cultural social system is functionally related to its productive system, it follows that early human society resembles rudimentary, modern human society. This reasoning is supported by the large degree of social similarity among the present hunters and gatherers themselves, despite the fact that some of them are as historically distant from each other, as separated in contact and connection, as the paleolithic is separated from modern times. Further, simply because many food gatherers have been driven into marginal areas, they are not thereby disqualified from consideration. There still remain strong social resemblances between marginal peoples, such as Bushmen, Ona, and Eskimo, and those found in isolated, but otherwise

not ecologically marginal areas, such as many Australian groups and the Andaman Islanders.

A comparison of subhuman primate and primitive society must recognize the qualitative difference between the two. Human society is cultural society; the organization of organisms is governed by culture traits. The social life of subhuman primates is governed by anatomy and physiology. Variations in human society are independent of, and are not expressions of biological variations of the organism. Variations in primate society are direct expressions and concomitants of biological variation. Nissen writes: ". . . with one notable exception the phylogenetic course of behavioral development has been gradual . . . it has been a continuous affair, proceeding by quantitative rather than qualitative changes. The one exception is that which marks the transition from the highest non-human primates to man . . . At this point a new 'dimension' or mode of development emerges: culture."

It follows that assertions of specific phylogenetic continuities from anthropoid to primitive society must be summarily rejected, such as Yerkes' suggestion that delousing among primitives is a genetic survival of primate grooming, an activity which, Yerkes writes, also led to: "ton-sorial artistry, nursing, surgery, and other social services of man." in the same vein is Kempf's identification of the presenting behavior of a subordinate rhesus monkey with human prostitution. Furthermore, the terminology of cultural, social, and political organization should be disavowed when describing infrahuman primate society. The cultural anthropologist justifiably shudders when he reads of "clans," "communism," and "socialism," among howler monkeys, or of "harems," "overlords," "despots," "tyrants," "absolutism," and "slavery," among baboons.

The determinants of sociability are different in cultural and pre-cultural society. We find useful Zuckerman's contention that social organization in general is based upon "three main lines of behavior—search for food, search for mates, avoidance of enemies." Of these factors, the sexual one appears to be primary in the genesis of subhuman primate society: "The main factor that determines social groupings in sub-human primates is sexual attraction." Speaking of sexual attraction, Chance and Mead write, "The emergence of this feature into prominence in their behavior has created primate society." It was the development of the physiological capacity to mate during much of, if not throughout the menstrual cycle, and at all seasons that impelled the formation of year round heterosexual groups among monkeys and apes. Within the primate order, a new level of social integration emerges, one that surpasses that of other mammals whose mating periods, and hence heterosexual groupings, are very limited in duration and by season. Certainly, defense against predation is also a determinant of subhuman

primate sociability, but it, and the search for food, appear to be secondary to sex. The influence of sexual attraction in promoting solidarity among subhuman primates has been noted in the field. Carpenter has observed of the howlers: "With repetition of the reproductive cycle in the female and with interrupted breeding throughout the year, the process of group integration through sexual behavior is repeatedly operative, establishing and reinforcing intersexual social bonds."

Sexual attraction remains a determinant of human sociability. But it has become subordinated to the search for food, to economics. A most significant advance of early cultural society was the strict repression and canalization of sex, through the incest tabu, in favor of the expansion of kinship, and thus mutual aid relations. Primate sexuality is utilized in human society to *reinforce* bonds of economic and to a lesser extent, defensive alliance. As Miller says, "All marriage schemes are largely devices to check and regulate promiscuous behavior in the interest of human economic schemes." This is not to underplay the importance of primate sexuality in determining certain general characteristics of human society. If culture had not developed in the primate line, but instead among sexless creatures, marriage and rules of exogamy and endogamy would not be means of establishing cohesive groups in cultural society. But, in the transition from subhuman to human society, cooperation in subsistence activities became the dominant cause of solidarity, avoidance of enemies a secondary cause, while sex became simply a facilitating mechanism.

These propositions are best documented by detailed consideration of primate and primitive society, wherein the differences in causes of sociability will be seen to pervade the comparison, and to turn generic continuity into specific discontinuity.

## 2. *Primate and Primitive Societies*

Territoriality is one of a number of common features of primate and primitive social behavior. It is also general among lower vertebrates—perhaps it is a universal characteristic of society. Territoriality arises from competition over living conditions, and has the selective advantage of distributing the species in its habitat so as to maintain population density at or below its optimum.

Territorial relations among groups of subhuman primates of the same species are generally exclusive. Except for the few animals that are driven out of one group and may attach themselves to another, primate societies are usually semi-closed societies. Each horde has a focus of favorite feeding and resting places to which it is often deflected by contact with other groups. Contact between groups of the same species at territorial borders is generally competitive and antagonistic, some-

times violently so. Subhuman primate groups apparently have little tendency to federation. They, "*do not have supergroup social mechanisms . . .* Kinship relations are not operative and inbreeding is the rule rather than the exception. . . ." Carpenter finds the origin of intergroup cooperation characteristic of primitive tribalism, "difficult to trace in subhuman primates which I have studied."

Primate territorial relations are altered by the development of culture in the human species. Territoriality among hunters and gatherers is never exclusive, and group membership is apt to shift and change according to the variability of food resources in space and time. Savage society is open, and corresponding to ecological variations, there are degrees of openness: 1) Where food resources are evenly distributed and tend to be constant year to year, territory is clearly demarcated and stable, and, considering the nucleus of males, the same for group membership. The Ona and most Australian groups are representative of this condition. Stability of membership is effected through customary rules of patrilocal residence, which is usually coupled with local exogamy. Patrilocal residence confers the advantage of continuity of occupation for hunters in areas with which they are familiar. 2) Where food resources are evenly distributed during some seasons, and variably abundant during others, exclusiveness of territory and membership are only seasonal. Local groups of Central Kalahari Bushmen, for example, remain fixed in territories focused around water holes during the dry season; whereas, in the rainy season, such groups mingle and hunt together. Similarly the Semang have seasonal territories fixed by the distribution of the durian tree; after the harvest, territories and exclusive groups dissolve, to be reconstituted at the next durian season. Under these conditions, patrilocal residence and local exogamy are preferred but not strict rules, and local endogamy and matrilocality occur. The Andaman Islanders, with relatively fixed territories, a tendency toward local exogamy, and no residence rule, and the Yahgan, who tend to be locally exogamous, patrilocal, and territorially exclusive, may also fall into this ecological type. However, data available for classification of these groups are inadequate. 3) Finally, there are food gatherers among whom territoriality is *de facto* nonexistent, and local group composition highly variable. These occupy areas where food resources vary in local abundance seasonally and annually. Families coalesce and separate *ad hoc* corresponding to accessibility of supplies. Postmarital residence may be in the group of either spouse, and band aggregates are agamous—there are no rules. The Great Basin Shoshoni, the Eskimo, and the pre-fur trade Naskapi fall into this category.

[Philippine and Congo pygmies are presently of the first type: rigid territory, patrilocal, exogamous. However, both live in symbiotic, subservient relation to agricultural peoples; and at least for the Congo

Twides, territorial exclusiveness is clearly a function of boundaries between patron Bantu villages (though Gusinde would disagree). The Heikum Bushmen, also in symbiotic, subservient status to patrilineal Hottentot and Bantu groups, are another instance of the same thing. Unlike other Bushmen, the Heikum live in well defined territories and practice strict patrilocal and local exogamy. Leacock's Naskapi studies suggest that bilocal, nonterritorial, unstable bands commonly become so formalized under outside influences of this general sort.]

Territoriality among hunters and gatherers is sometimes maintained by conflict. There appears to be a direct relationship between intensity of intergroup feud and exclusiveness of territory and membership. Thus trespass is strongly resented and interband feuds are relatively frequent among Australians and the Ona; whereas, where territoriality is weak, the concept of trespass is naturally poorly developed, and fighting consists of squabbles between particular families. However, in all cases the outcome of trespass depends on the previous relations between neighbors, and these are usually *friendly*. Even among the Australians, adjacent groups would be allowed to hunt in a band's territory if in need; there is, in Spencer and Gillen's phrase, "no constant state of enmity" between neighbors. Everywhere, no matter how strict the rules of territory, constant visiting between bands prevents the development of closed groups. And everywhere exclusiveness is easily broken down if there is some food windfall, or if food is differentially abundant in adjacent locales.

Hunters and gatherers live in relatively open groups between which relations are usually friendly; infrahuman primates of the same species live in relatively closed groups, between which relations are usually competitive. The invention of kinship and the incest tabu of cultural society are responsible for this difference. Through marrying out, friendly, cooperative relations are established between families. When exogamy can be extended to the local group, cooperation between bands is effected. Intermarrying Australian bands are described by A. P. Elkin as, "a family of countries bound together by those sentiments which function between members of a family and its near relations." It is the kinship ethic of mutual aid that permits populations of hunters and gatherers to shift about according to the distribution of resources. Kinship is thus selectively advantageous in a zoological sense; it permits primitives to adjust to more variable habitats than subhuman primates. Moreover, the kinship relations between groups, and the ceremonies and exchanges of goods that frequently accompany interband meetings, give rise to a further social development: tribalism. Common custom, common dialect, a name and a feeling of unity are created among otherwise independent groups. The stage for further political evolution is thereby set.

We turn now to the internal organization of primate and primitive societies.

The subhuman primate horde varies in size from an average of four animals among the gibbon to several hundred baboons. Group size is not correlated with suborder differences, except that great ape hordes are generally at the lower end of the primate range; orang groups are apparently as small as gibbons, and chimpanzee average 8.5 per group. The horde may remain together at all times, or may disperse into segments of various constitution—mating groups, female packs, male packs—during daytime feeding, concentrating at night resting places. Howling monkeys typically travel together; spider and baboon groups are instances of segmented hordes.

With the exception of the gibbon, the primate horde characteristically contains more adult females than adult males. In observed wild groups the ratio ranges from nearly 3:1 for howlers, to 1:1 for gibbons. The ratio for spider monkeys, 1.6 females per male, is probably near the average for the primates. The usual inequality apparently reflects the degree of dominance and competition among males for female sexual partners. There are almost always unmated males, either peripherally attached to heterosexual groups, or existing outside the horde.

We have argued that sexual attraction is the primary cause of subhuman primate sociability. Indeed, in many cases the entire horde is a single reproduction unit or mate group. But there are significant species variations in the constitution of hordes and mate groups. There appears to be a progressive development in the primate order from promiscuous relations within the group to the establishment of exclusive sex partnerships, one of which comprises the nucleus of a horde. Since the young remain attached to adult females throughout, the highest forms of primate mate groups resemble the elementary human family in composition. The emergence of exclusive, independent mate groups includes the following steps: 1) Among New World monkeys observed in free-ranging conditions, howlers and spiders, the only stable relations within a horde are between females and their young. Only when females are in the oestrus period of the menstrual cycle do they leave the female-offspring pack and become attached to specific males, and then not exclusively, but to several in succession. The mated pair is a temporary, non-exclusive unit. 2) Old World monkeys develop more permanent sex partnerships. Rhesus shows the trend toward exclusiveness. Again in rhesus, the female-young pack is a separate unit, and sex partnerships are only temporarily established while a female is in heat. However, for every female the succession order among her male partners corresponds to their dominance position. Therefore, dominant males have all females in oestrus, while subordinate males are excluded from some when there

are not enough to go around. The mate group of the Japanese monkey, in the same genus as rhesus, is very similar. 3) The baboon mate group is a simple extrapolation from rhesus. The steps involved are: the exclusion of subordinate males from sexual relations with females, and the development of constant association between a dominant male, females and young. The baboon mate group is a permanent, exclusive relationship between a dominant male and his several females, the young following their mothers. Subordinate males may remain attached to the group on its fringes, or form unisexual bands. The baboon horde consists of several such mate groups and male bands, each relatively independent. 4) The ape horde tends to be composed of a single, independent mate group of the baboon type. In the gibbon, this consists of one male, one female plus young. The evidence from the other anthropoid apes is not conclusive; however, gorilla, orang and chimpanzee hordes apparently consist of mate groups of one male, two or more females and their young, and perhaps subordinate males.

The emergence of exclusive, permanent mate groups among higher primates is explained by the progressive emancipation of sexual behavior from hormonal control running through the order. In monkeys, copulation outside the female's fertile period is relatively rare. In apes—more so, in man—sex is freed from hormonal regulation, being subject instead to cortical and social control. The oftmade alternative assertion that the development of the family is due to increasing duration of infant dependency is not supportable. With one minor exception, subhuman primate males are never significantly involved in rearing the young, save in retrieving the fallen, and indirectly as group defenders. The exceptional case of the male Japanese monkey that rears the older infant if a female has two in succession is not significant here, since there is no family-type group involved. This behavior was observed only in one of a number of hordes of Japanese monkeys, and is entirely unique among subhuman primates. Baboon and rhesus males are known to have killed young in the course of sexual attacks upon their mothers. A long dependency period cements mother-offspring bonds but not necessarily father-mother-offspring relations. Only when there is an economic division of labor by sex can infant dependency produce this effect. In subhuman primates there is no sexual division of economic labor.

Social relations within the subhuman primate horde vary according to the age, sex and dominance statuses of interacting animals. Leaving aside dominance for a moment, most social interaction can be adequately described by utilizing three elemental status categories: adult male, adult female, and young. Interaction of animals of these categories produce six "qualitatively distinct" social relations: male-male; female-female; male-female; male-young; female-young; young-young. The content of most of these relations can be inferred from the preceeding and succeed-

ing discussion. It will be seen that age and sex differences remain important social distinctions among primitive hunters and gatherers.

Dominance statuses are found among all known monkeys and apes, as well as many lower vertebrates. Dominance is established by competition for mates, for food, for position in progression, and the like—Carpenter has remarked that, “. . . in every known typical grouping of monkeys and apes there is persisting competition for priority rights to incentives.” Conflict is often particularly prominent among males over females in oestrus. Males are usually dominant over females. [This last is subject to exception when females are in heat. Dominance has been experimentally raised in primates and other vertebrates by injections of male sex hormones.] Dominance status affects behavior in every aspect of social life: play, feeding, sex, grooming, competition between groups, and it even determines the spatial relations of animals within the horde. Dominance among paired animals is easily determined experimentally by introducing a series of food pellets to which there is limited access, and noting which animal consistently appropriates them. Nowlis’ food appropriation experiments, performed with differentially satiated animals, show that dominance is a social behavior arising from conflict—not a simple, independent drive for “prestige,” as is sometimes claimed.

Maslow contends that the quality of dominance varies among New and Old World monkeys and the apes, and that variation in dominance quality is correlated with differences in social organization. Platyrrhines, according to Maslow, show the greatest indifference in social relations. Dominance is “tenuous,” “non-contactual,” frequently not expressed, and often ascertained in the laboratory only with difficulty. In contrast, “catarrhine dominance is rough, brutal and aggressive; it is of the nature of a powerful, persistent, selfish urge that expresses itself in ferocious bullying, fighting and sexual aggression.” Weak and sick animals are attacked; in competition over food, a subordinate animal would starve. Chimpanzees however, show “friendly dominance.” Dominant animals protect subordinates, never attack them except in the form of rough play. Crawford in one laboratory experiment noted that only 0.4 per cent of chimpanzee social behavior could be described as aggressive, and other field and captivity data generally bear out Maslow’s hypothesis of sub-order differences in dominance quality.

There appear to be correlated differences in the grooming behavior of the suborders. Yerkes advances the notion that social, as opposed to self grooming, increases in frequency from prosimian through anthropoid ape. Grooming serves a biological function in removing parasites and the like, but this is nearly equally accomplished by self or social grooming. Therefore, social grooming takes on added significance as a “social service” in the higher primates. Moreover, grooming in higher primates is not only social, but reciprocal. Social grooming among wild



gibbons has been noted to be frequent and reciprocal. By contrast, evidence from field and laboratory indicates that social grooming is comparatively infrequent among New World monkeys. It is difficult to say from present evidence that social and reciprocal grooming increase from Old World monkeys to anthropoids, but on the whole, Yerkes' assertions are supportable.

The emergence of reciprocal social behavior and the progressive tempering of dominance relations are significant trends in the primate line—trends which, we shall note, are continued in primitive society. On the other hand, economic teamwork and mutual aid are nearly zero among subhuman primates, including anthropoids. Spontaneous cooperation—as opposed to one animal helping another—has not been observed among them. Chimpanzees have been trained to solve problems cooperatively, but fail to do so without tuition. Monkeys apparently cannot even be taught to cooperate. Spontaneous teamwork supposes symbolizing: “Teamwork makes intellectual demands of the same order as those made by language. Psychologically, it may, in fact, be difficult to distinguish between the two.” Much has been made of food solicitation and sharing among chimpanzees—one case was noted in the field. Nissen and Crawford's elaborate experiment showed that chimpanzees share food pellets and tokens, although sharing was much less frequent than not, and was evidently non-reciprocal. However, in a similar experiment using animals tested for dominance, Nowlis observed that every case of sharing—1/10 of the food shared in 80 of 480 trials—was from subordinate to dominant; dominants never gave food to subordinates. Therefore, “food sharing” here is a function of previous dominance competition and actually indicates monopolization, not pooling, of a limited supply.

We now consider the social system of hunters and gatherers among whom the usual band contains twenty to fifty people. During poor seasons, however, it may fragment into small family groups. We have already looked at band structure. Corresponding to ecological conditions, bands range in composition from an enlarged patrilocal family to a congeries of variably related nuclear families. Almost all members will be kinsmen, and the etiquette of kinship behavior regulates social life. Radcliffe-Brown noted that in Australia, for example, kinship: “. . . regulates more or less definitely the behavior of an individual to every person with whom he has any social dealings whatsoever.”

The family is the only social unit inside the band; where bands are unstable, it is the major form of social organization. Among primitives, the division of economic labor by sex is fundamental to the family and makes marriage an economic alliance—or, in Westermarck's terms, “. . . marriage is something more than a regulated sexual relation. It is an economic institution.” The complementary economic roles of the sexes determine certain qualities of primitive marriage. First, it is a neces-

sity for all adults; the unmated adult male of the primate horde rarely has a counterpart in primitive bands. Secondly, polygamy is usually economically impractical; monogamy is prevalent. Finally, as indicated, stable heterosexual relations are not simply determined by sexual attraction, but by economics. Sex is easily had in many hunting and gathering groups, both before and beside marriage, but such neither necessarily establishes the family nor destroys it. Legal rights to sexual privileges of spouses are often waived in favor of socio-economic advantages, as in wife lending. The very rules of exogamy and incest prevent the formation of the family on a basis of simple sexual attraction. Steward's statement of the economic basis of the Shoshoni marriage can be duplicated from accounts of other simple societies: "Marriage was an economic alliance in a very real sense . . . a union which brought into cooperation the complementary economic activities of the sexes—a person could not, in the interest of self-preservation, afford to remain long single. . . the role of exclusive sex privileges in matrimony seems to have been secondary." Compare Radcliffe-Brown on the Australians: "The family is based on the co-operation of man and wife, the former providing the flesh food and the latter the vegetable food . . . this economic aspect of the family is a most important one . . . I believe that in the minds of the natives themselves this aspect of marriage, i.e., its relation to subsistence, is of greatly more importance than the fact that man and wife are sexual partners."

In man, therefore, primate sexuality has been brought under cultural control; it has become a means to other ends. Another aspect of primitive marriage teaches the same lesson. Unlike primate unions, created and maintained in conflict, primitive marriage is a powerful factor in inter-familial and interband alliance. Again, as Steward writes of the Shoshoni, and one can find countless ethnographic paraphrases of this truism: "Marriage was more a contract between families than between individuals." Among hunters and gatherers, marriages are frequently arranged (or at least approved) by the families rather than the spouses. Considerations often pass between the groups, thus setting the pattern for future cooperation. Women may be exchanged between groups, or intermarriage between certain parties preferred and repeated, solidifying both the marriages and group relations. The alliance between families may be paramount to the extent that a marriage can survive the death of one of the partners, he or she being replaced through the levirate or sororate.

There is an outstanding implication of these characteristics of primitive marriage and the family. Given the division of labor by sex and the formation of domestic units through marriage, it follows that sharing of food and other items, rather than being non-existent, as among monkeys and apes, is a *sine qua non* of the human condition. Food sharing is an outstanding functional criterion of man. In the domestic economy of

the family there is constant reciprocity and pooling of resources. And, at the same time that kinship is extended throughout the band of families, so are the principles of the domestic economy. Among all hunters and gatherers there is a constant give and take of vital goods through hospitality and gift exchange. Everywhere, generosity is a great social virtue. Also general is the custom of pooling large game among the entire band, either as a matter of course, or in times of scarcity. Where kinship is extended beyond the local group by interband marriage, so are reciprocity and mutual aid. Goods may pass over great distances through a series of kinship transactions. "Trade" is thus established. Hunters and gatherers are able to take mutual advantage of the exploitation of distant environments, a phenomenon without parallel in the primate order. This emphasis on generosity, on mutual aid, and the attribution of social prestige for generosity, stand in direct opposition to the tendency among primates to monopolize vital goods. Perhaps the elaborated emphasis on sharing among primitives is to be partially understood as a cultural means for overcoming primate tendencies in the opposite direction.

In the system of social status, there is a generic continuity between primate and primitive society. Qualitative social differences of sex and age that are marked in subhuman primate groups are major principles of status and role allocation among hunters and gatherers. The division of labor by sex is an example. So is the pervasive recognition of sex, seniority and generation in kinship behavior and terminology.

There is also some continuity in dominance status. Leadership falls to men among hunters and gatherers, although, what is possibly different from subhuman primates, it is especially the elders that are respected. There are, however, important qualitative differences in dominance relations among hunters and gatherers and subhuman primates. Each primitive band usually has an elderly headman. The respect accorded him and other elders is not due to their physical ability to appropriate a limited supply of desired objects. (They may be preferentially treated in communal food distribution, but this is another thing.) Quite the opposite from subhuman primates, a man must be generous to be respected. Prestige among hunters and gatherers can be estimated by noting who gives away the most—precisely the reverse of the test for dominance status among subhuman primates. The position of the headman rests primarily on superior knowledge of game movements, water and other resources, ritual and other things which govern social life. Thus Boas pointed out that there is a direct relation between the authority of Eskimo headmen of various groups and the distance and difficulties involved in traveling between winter and summer huntings grounds. But such knowledge alone cannot breed power. The leader of the band has no means to compel obedience. He is commonly described as ruling through "moral influence." A Congo pygmy leader bluntly told Sche-

besta, "There would be no point in his giving orders, as nobody would heed them." Steward comments that the title, "talker," given to a Shoshoni leader, "truly designates his most important function." The leader of the Central Eskimo camp is picturesquely referred to as *isumataq*, "he who thinks" (for the others). In all hunters and gatherers, the heads of the separate families exercise more control than the informal headmen over the whole. Compared to infrahuman primates, ranking hierarchies and dominance approach zero among hunters and gatherers. Yet, where all interact as kinsmen, and sharing a scanty food supply replaces conflict over it, this is expectable.

### 3. *Summary and Conclusions*

The transition from subhuman primate society to rudimentary cultural society was at the same time a process of generic continuity and of specific discontinuity. If culture had not developed among a species of primates, but among animals of different behavioral characteristics, then the forms and development of culture would be basically different. The social behavior of primates is the foundation of some general features of human society. On the other hand, no specific trait of cultural society, even in its most rudimentary state, is, in both form and functioning, a direct survival of some specific trait of primate social behavior. This discontinuity is due to the fact that subhuman primate society is a direct expression of the physiology of the species operating in a given environment; whereas cultural traits govern the social adaptation of the human primate. The development of culture did not simply give expression to man's primate nature, it replaced that nature as the direct determinant of social behavior, and in so doing, channeled it—at times repressed it completely. The most significant transformation effected by cultural society was the subordination of the search for mates—the primary determinant of subhuman primate sociability—to the search for food. In the process also, economic cooperation replaced competition, and kinship replaced conflict as the principal mechanism of organization.

What are the generic continuities? Territoriality is one. But similarities such as these are common to a wide variety of societies, including those of lower vertebrates. A more restricted continuity is the utilization of the powerful social functions of primate sexuality in human social organizations. To repeat an earlier observation, it is only against the unique background of primate sexual behavior that one fully understands why marriage and marriage rules are general mechanisms for integrating cooperative human groups. Another generic survival of simian society is the allocation of social functions on the lines of sex and age among hunters and gatherers.

Of particular interest are social advances within the primate order

upon which cultural society directly elaborated. Here the cultural developments appear capstones to trends which had begun to unfold in precultural conditions. In the primate line the exclusive mate group appears to have developed out of the promiscuous horde. In the transformation to the human family, the anthropoid mate group was altered more in function than in form. A second primate advance is the development of reciprocal social services in grooming. Generalized to food sharing, reciprocity is basic to cultural society. Thirdly, there is the softening of dominance relations among higher primates. In primitive society, dominance or prestige is especially associated with service to the group.

The most significant advances in the early evolution of cultural society can be deduced by comparison of primate and primitive groups. To us these appear to be: 1) the division of labor by sex and the establishment of the family on this basis; 2) the invention of kinship; 3) the incest prohibition and its extension through exogamy, thus extending kinship; 4) the overcoming of primate competition over food in favor of sharing and cooperation; and 5) the abolition of other primate conflicts leading to the establishment of dominance hierarchies.

These five advances are complementary; nothing is said here of their order of appearance or relative significance. It is claimed that they are great triumphs of early culture. These developments are necessary social counterparts of the continuous tool activity which enabled man to become the dominant form of life.

## 17 *The Natural History of the Family*



Ralph Linton

HERODOTUS, WHO COMMENTED ON THE MATRILINEAL LYKKIANS, IS APPARENTLY the first writer to have noted that the family takes different forms in different societies. Indeed, if the presence of a married couple is made essential to the definition of family, there is at least one well-documented case, the Nayar of the Malabar area of India, in which the family did not occur. Even though the Nayar example is extreme, there are many societies in which the married couple is completely subordinated to other small-scale kin groups. In such societies the functions we are accustomed to think of as parental are normally and regularly assumed by other relatives. The selection which follows outlines the main principles of family organization and discusses some consequences of the different groupings which result.

There is every reason to believe that the family is the oldest of human social institutions and that it will survive, in one form or another, as long as our species exists. Mark Twain's dictum that nothing is so con-

SOURCE: *The Family: Its Function and Destiny*, Ruth Nanda Anshen, ed., (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947, rev. 1959), pp. 18-38. Reprinted with the permission of the editor and publishers.

The author (1893-1953) was an ethnologist of wide experience though his primary association was with the cultures of Polynesia and Madagascar. Linton's interests were most diverse: culture-history, primitive art and relations of anthropology and psychiatry were among his favorite subjects. His last book was *The Tree of Culture* (posthumous, 1955). Among his other works are *The Study of Man* (1936) and *The Cultural Background of Personality* (1945).

tinuous as marriage holds true from whatever direction we consider it. Nevertheless, both the origins of the family and the steps by which it has developed into its present multiplicity of forms are obscure. Since social institutions are among the most perishable of human artifacts, we have no direct evidence regarding any of the types of family organization which existed prior to the beginning of written records. The great variety of familial institutions found among existing "primitives" serves to show the range of possibilities but provides few clues as to what may have been developmental sequences. At most, we can say that certain forms of family are quite unsuited to particular environmental-cultural configurations. For example, no group which lives by hunting and food gathering could seclude its women in harem fashion. Nor would a group in which there was a persistent surplus of women over men be likely to practice polyandry. Beyond such simple generalizations it is impossible to go. All statements about the origin and evolution of family types must be classed as suppositions. Some of these suppositions appear much more probable than others, but none of them is susceptible of scientific proof.

This caveat is made necessary by the calm assurance with which certain authors have discussed the development of the family and by the way in which certain nineteenth-century speculations on the subject have been incorporated into our folklore. Partly because of the almost psychopathic interest of nineteenth-century Europeans in everything connected with sex, the family was one of the first institutions to be investigated by social scientists. The thinking of these scientists was dominated by the recently promulgated theory of evolution and by a calm ethnocentrism which placed their own social institutions at the apex of all lines of development. It was assumed that the western European, and especially the Victorian English, type of family must be the ultimate flowering of the institution. Given such a datum point, it was possible to arrange all other forms of family in an evolutionary series simply by seeing how far each fell short of this ideal. Sexual promiscuity was put at the most distant point—that is, at the beginning of the series—to be followed by group marriage, then polyandry, then polygyny, and lastly monogamy. It was assumed that, running parallel with this, there had been an evolution of patterns of descent and family control. Children were at first the common property of the promiscuous group. This was followed by a development of matriarchal, matrilineal institutions, which in turn were transformed, after a struggle, into the patriarchal family.

All that we know of the physical and psychological characteristics not only of man but of the primates in general makes these early speculations look like pure fantasy. Apparently the only primates who live in sexually promiscuous hordes are the South American howler monkeys, a

species very remote from our own line of ancestry. All other primates appear to be either monogamous or polygynous, with partnership durations which would not be considered a bad record in Hollywood. Although most species show active sexual curiosity and will make advances to strange individuals, such episodes do not disrupt the family pattern.

In the face of this evidence the old theory of primitive promiscuity has been discarded by practically all social scientists. Men may be different from the other primates, but they are not that different. Recent years, however, have witnessed the resuscitation of another early theory of family origins and primordial events. According to certain psychoanalysts the original human family (and in reading their accounts one has the feeling that there was only one) was completely patriarchal. It consisted of a group of females and young, dominated by a single irascible and highly jealous old male. This "old man" preempted all females, including his own daughters, and drove away his sons. Eventually these sons found release for both their sex and their hunger tensions in the murder of their father and his subsequent consumption. We need not go into the catastrophic effects of all this on their super-egos—effects still reflected in some of our social institutions.

Aside from its cannibalistic features this theory is more in keeping with the habits of our closest sub-human relatives, the anthropoids, than is the initial promiscuity theory. Its credibility—for of course it can be neither proved nor disproved—rests in large part on the point in our ancestors' evolution which we take as the beginning of human status. Even at a time when our ancestors looked more like gorillas than like us, they were living in groups larger than single families and hunting in packs. None of the living species of gregarious primates drives young males out of the band or resorts to the murder of old ones. At the human level such practices would weaken the unit to the point where it would be unable to maintain itself. If there ever was the "old man" type of family organization it must have ended long before our ancestors became recognizably human.

In view of what we know of the organization of those human societies which are still at the simplest levels of economic and technological development, it seems safe to assume that even the earliest representatives of our species had fairly permanent matings. Moreover, it is highly probable that the bulk of such unions, as in all societies of which we have record, were monogamous. Presumably there was a certain casualness in sex relations, tempered by a lively jealousy on the part of both sexes, and a lack of formal regulation as to the number of spouses. No female of breeding age would remain unattached for long, and, if there were more females than males in the band, the better hunters would absorb the surplus into their family groups. The less common surplus



male would attach himself to some family group and might even be permitted to share the wife's favors if he showed proper submission and gratitude to the real husband.

Simple family organization of this sort could serve as a starting point for the development of all later familial forms, but it seems highly improbable that there was any regular order for the emergence of these forms. In other words, there has been not a single universal evolution of the family but a series of local evolutions moving by different paths to different ends. We cannot trace these paths in detail, but by the study and comparison of existing family forms we can get a fairly good idea of the forces which have been at work to produce them.

The first difficulty in making such a comparative study is that of delimiting the field. The English term "family" is applied indiscriminately to two social units which are basically different in their composition and functional potentialities. The word may be taken to mean either an intimate, closely organized group consisting of spouses and offspring or a diffuse and in our case almost unorganized group of blood relatives. To avoid confusion, these two types of grouping will be referred to respectively as the *conjugal family* and the *consanguine family*. Both types of grouping are recognized by practically all societies and are terminologically distinguished in many languages.

There can be no question that the conjugal type of family, as a functional unit, is the earlier in human history and was the first to be integrated into social structures. Blood relationship, of course, is as old as mating and reproduction, but its recognition and especially its employment as a criterion for delimiting the membership of organized, functional social groupings must have required a considerable degree of sophistication. Even in the current social systems which place most stress on the consanguine family, this unit has a certain artificial quality. It is never delimited on a completely biological basis, that is, on blood relationship alone. Such relationship is always stressed with relation to a particular line of descent or certain degrees of consanguinity or both. In other words, the consanguine family is a social artifact whereas the conjugal family is a biological unit differing little, in its essential qualities, from similar units to be observed in a great variety of mammalian species. Even as a formal institution the conjugal family everywhere incorporates a series of behavior patterns which are so closely interrelated with the physiological and psychological characteristics of our species that it is difficult to see how that species could have survived without it.

At the foundation of every variant of the conjugal family lies an assumption of continuity in the mated relationship. Even in those societies which impose no formal strictures on the separation of mates, the role of the conjugal group is based on an anticipation of permanence, and the average individual establishes an enduring partnership with someone of

the opposite sex at least by middle age. This continuity of mating has a physiological basis in certain characteristics which man shares with most of the sub-human primates. The primate order is characterized by the absence of any clearly defined rutting season and by constant sexual activity and interest on the part of the male. It is also characterized by marked differences in the size and vigor of males and females, with consequent patterns of male dominance. There are a few exceptions to the second generalization, but it holds for most primate species, including our own. The combination of male dominance and of constant male interest in females as sexual objects operates to give matings stability and presumably did so even before our ancestors had achieved full human status. Even the earliest men were able to keep particular women to themselves and to prevent these women from bestowing their favors on other men, at least as long as their husbands were present.

Very early in human history these physiological factors must have been reinforced by psychological ones. Although man is the most flexible and the most easily conditioned of all the primates, he has an acute need for security in his personal relationships and a desire for congenial companionship and perfected response. These needs, although less immediately compulsive than the physiological tensions of sex, are far more continuous in their operations. Relationships which will satisfy them cannot be established between any and all individuals and can only be established through long-continued association. When one had found a partner who could satisfy both these needs and the sexual ones, such a partner was to be valued and retained even though sexual curiosity might lead to occasional unfaithfulness.

Presumably the factors just discussed had given considerable permanence to human matings before any cultural factors came into play. At least the development of the most important cultural feature making for permanence in modern unmechanized societies could scarcely have taken place without some pre-existing pattern of continuous partnerships. This feature is the universal differentiation of economic activities along sex lines. In all known societies men are trained in certain skills and women in other skills, and the division is so adjusted that a man and a woman together form a largely self-sufficient unit for production and consumption. Typically, the man is the provider and the woman the preparer of raw materials. They are able to satisfy their basic needs for food, shelter, and comfort while together but not if separated. It is only in recent times that this basic pattern of economic interdependence of the sexes has begun to break down, with consequences to the family as an institution which we still perceive only dimly. In the unmechanized society such interdependence does as much to give stability to marriage as all other factors combined. Even uncongenial partners are held together by their need for each other's contribution to their individual physical comfort.

Although the continued partnership of a man and a woman provides the basis for every conjugal family unit, such units also involve other relationships—those of parents to offspring and of offspring to each other. With regard to the parent-child relationship, the mother may be taken as the central point. There are no indications of the existence of anything like a paternal instinct in our species. The group of father, mother, and offspring is held together by the father's attachment to the mother and the child's physical dependency upon her, reinforced at a later period by ties of affection and emotional dependency developed during its infantile period. The association of father and child is a secondary one, deriving from their common interest in the mother and their common residence with her. In this respect it parallels the association between siblings—that is, brothers and sisters—which is also established by common dependence upon the mother and by common residence. The fact that these associations are more or less fortuitous does not prevent them from providing an opportunity for the development of mutual adjustments in personality and of strong ties of affection. There is abundant evidence that similar adjustments and ties can be developed between individuals who have no biological relationship to each other. The ease with which adopted children or stepparents can be incorporated into a conjugal family group is a case in point.

That the conjugal family must be exceedingly old in human history is proved by its close adjustment to certain innate characteristics of our species. Thus it is intimately linked with the difference between the human reproductive cycle and the period of dependency of offspring. It seems that under natural conditions women tend to produce offspring at intervals of eighteen months on the average, whereas the period of the child's dependence upon adults for mere physical survival may be conservatively set at ten years. It is hard to see how a species in which such a disharmony existed could have survived in the absence of permanent matings which assured the female of male assistance in the care of the offspring.

The conjugal family pattern is also in close adjustment with what we know of the optimum conditions for personality development in the young individual. Apparently the infant requires a large measure of affection and adult response over and above the satisfaction of its physiological needs. The high infantile death rate in even the most scientifically run orphan asylums bears witness to this fact. In order to provide this response the mother must transfer to other individuals some of the responsibility for the care of older but still immature offspring. In practice, it is usually the husband or elder siblings who assume such responsibility, but such a transfer would be impossible in the absence of a relatively stable, continuing family group.

As the child grows older the presence of siblings plays an important

role in its socialization and in the development of a flexible personality. Elder children provide it with conscious goals and models for behavior which are comprehensible and within the range of its developing abilities. Moreover, in many respects, the sibling group is a microcosm of adult society. The presence of both older and younger children gives the developing individual an opportunity for the simultaneous exercise of dominance and submission while keeping both within limits. Older siblings are unable to enforce or reward patterns of complete submission in the way that adults can. Younger children can resist domination to a degree which makes impossible the development of the spurious sense of power which a child may acquire through the good-natured acquiescence of adults in its demands. In constant interaction with individuals whose abilities are nearly the same as its own, the child can develop a realistic evaluation of its adequacies and inadequacies and patterns of social behavior which will be adjusted to both. The importance of this can be judged from the frequent difficulties of an only child in our own society.

The adjustments to each other which siblings develop during their period of common residence and mutual dependence upon the parents always survive into adult life. This fact lies at the foundation of all consanguine family organization, much as the facts of mating and childhood dependence lie at the foundation of the conjugal family. The habits of mutual dependence and the ties of affection developed between siblings continue to operate even after they have mated and assumed nuclear positions in new conjugal families. This inevitably results in some division of loyalties between the consanguine and the conjugal family groups, and the possibilities for conflict are increased by the fact that the consanguine group can perform most of the functions of the conjugal group. Thus, since it normally includes adults of both sexes, it can be self-contained in terms of the complementary skills required for economic production. For the same reason, it can provide successfully for the care and rearing of children, at least after their weaning. Lastly, it can afford its members a large measure of emotional security and of perfected response in intimate personal relations, thus satisfying their psychological needs. In fact, the only personal needs which it cannot satisfy are the sexual ones. It fails in this because of the existence of incest taboos. The reasons for such taboos appear to be complex and are still imperfectly understood. It is unnecessary to discuss them here. Suffice it to say that practically all societies prohibit the marriage of siblings and thus prevent the fusion of the consanguine and conjugal family units to a single familial institution.

So many of the familial functions can be performed by either a consanguine or a conjugal unit that, to avoid conflict, it is necessary for societies to delimit the roles of each with considerable clarity. Almost every possible type of division of function can be found in one society or an-

other. Our own family organization lies near one end of the series of possible variations. All familial functions are concentrated in the conjugal group, which is surrounded by a fringe of loosely attached and intermittently operative relatives. In many non-European societies, on the other hand, practically all functions except those connected with reproduction are concentrated in the consanguine group. The spouses of group members are never really incorporated into the family and look to their own consanguine families for the satisfaction of many of their practical and most of their emotional needs.

Such a heavy emphasis on the consanguine group has important effects on marriage, which tends to become a matter of contractual arrangement between groups rather than of affinity between individuals. Partners are picked for the younger members mainly with an eye to the advantage of the family. The chances for incompatibility are correspondingly increased, while the economic dependence of the spouses on each other is minimal. Either partner can find in his or her own consanguine group satisfaction for all but sexual needs. Under these circumstances, the marital relationship is intrinsically brittle and partnerships have to be stabilized by external pressures.

In matriarchal societies such pressure is rarely exerted. Any of the functions connected with child care can be performed as well by a mother's brother as by a husband. Actually, marriages appear to be least stable in those societies in which the wife continues to live with her own consanguine group and her children are counted as members of it. In patriarchal societies, on the other hand, there tends to be a high development of machinery for insuring the continuity of marriage. This is especially true in those societies in which the wife leaves her own consanguine group and goes to live with that of her husband. The basis for this seems to be the interest of the husband's family in the children. A mother is far more necessary to their well-being than a father and vastly more difficult to replace. One of the commonest mechanisms for ensuring her continued presence is the giving of a bride price. When this has been accepted by the woman's family, its members will not receive her back except in cases of extreme ill treatment, since if they do so they must either provide a substitute or refund the money.

It is a curious fact that in such attempts to stabilize marriages the sanctions employed are almost always economic. Even in those societies which lean most heavily on supernatural sanctions for the enforcement of socially acceptable behavior, separations entail no supernatural punishment. This is in sharp contrast to the frequency of supernatural punishments for evasion of parent-and-child or sibling obligations. The reasons for this are not clear. Perhaps it stems from a subconscious recognition of the desirability of personal compatibility between spouses and

from a sympathy for those who have been forced into unsatisfactory relationships.

In the development of various social systems both the conjugal and consanguine family units have undergone numerous amplifications. The various elaborations of the consanguine group are so foreign to our own experience and have so little bearing on current conditions in our own society that it seems unnecessary to discuss them here. Joint family, lineage and clan, and the intricacies of relationship systems can be left to students of primitive society. The elaborations of the conjugal group, on the other hand, possess more than an academic interest for us, since they appear to be responses to situations which may well arise in our own society in the not too distant future.

Plural marriage is a widespread phenomenon; in fact, it is approved by a majority of the world's societies. Of its three possible forms, one, group marriage, is so rare that we need not concern ourselves with it, especially since it seems to have no functions which cannot be performed equally well by monogamous unions. Polyandry—that is plurality of husbands—is also comparatively rare but seems to be directly related to economic conditions. Contrary to popular belief, most uncivilized peoples exercise some control over population. The simplest method is that of female infanticide, and in groups with limited natural resources this is often carried to the point where it results in a marked surplus of adult males over females. This in itself is not enough to produce polyandry, but, when conditions are so hard that the labor of a single male no longer suffices to support a wife and children, this form of marriage is very likely to develop. Under sufficient economic stress it may even develop, as an alternative form of marriage, in societies where the numbers of the two sexes are approximately equal. Thus any social worker knows that it is not infrequent in the economically depressed sections of our own society, although the secondary husband is usually referred to as a boarder.

Polygyny, plurality of wives, is much more common than polyandry and the reasons for its occurrence appear to be more complex. The frequency of this type of mating among sub-human primates suggests that our own species may have a predisposition toward it, based on the physical dominance and the more constant sexual interest of males. Such a predisposition, if it exists, is reinforced by the presence of more adult females than males in most societies. This is due partly to the higher infant mortality of males, partly to the more dangerous occupations in which they usually engage. It is highly desirable, from the point of view of the society, that these surplus females should be given an opportunity to breed, thus maintaining the man power of the group. It is equally desirable that their offspring should be reared under normal familial conditions, with a mother's husband to teach sons the proper male skills and

social attitudes. Lastly, the presence of a number of unmated adults in any society is always a disturbing factor and a threat to the stability of marital relationships. This is especially the case in societies which provide women with no respected careers other than marriage. Except in societies where the men are constantly engaged in war or in extrahazardous activities, the surplus of females is never large and polygynous marriage tends to be limited to males at the higher economic and prestige levels. Even in societies which consider polygyny the ideal form of marriage most families are monogamous through force of circumstances.

It is always a surprise to persons reared in our own society to discover how smoothly patterns of plural marriage operate in groups which are accustomed to them and especially to find that they are usually approved by both sexes. There are numerous patterns, however, which contribute to this in the societies in question. Sexual jealousy is closely linked with the symbolic importance attached to the sexual act. Although there is reason to believe that such jealousy can never be completely eliminated, it can be greatly reduced by a combination of early conditioning and of rewards for its suppression. All jealousy is essentially a reaction to some situation which the individual perceives as a threat to dominance or to security in a personal relationship. When the individual has been taught that extra-marital relations on the part of the spouse do not constitute a threat to either, such relations lose most of their force as jealousy provocations. This is well illustrated by the frequency of wife lending as a recognized social institution. The man who lends his wife publicly and with social approval does not weaken his own relation with her and even establishes himself in a dominant position with respect to the man who accepts the favor. His psychological reactions under these circumstances are entirely different from those which he has when he discovers that his wife has taken a lover on her own initiative. No jealousy in the first case may well be linked with extreme jealousy in the second.

Still another factor which operates to limit jealousy within a polygamous family is the diffuseness of feelings of dependency and of emotional attachments which growing up in such a family tends to produce in the child. It is reared with several mothers or fathers, as the case may be, to any one of whom it can turn for emotional response and for the satisfaction of its physiological needs. Instead of a fierce and exclusive attachment to one individual, it develops a number of attachments, none of which produces a very high emotional effect. This conditioning makes it possible for it, as an adult, to accept the sharing of a spouse with equanimity if not enthusiasm.

Lastly, all polygamous societies provide plural spouses with rewards for the suppression of jealousy and for willing co-operation in such expanded family units. The woman who is an only wife in a polygynous

society tends to be badly overworked and to welcome the addition of other wives because they will lighten her labors. She is also subject to the stigma which attaches in any society to the wife of a man who is a social and economic failure. When plural marriage is a symbol of economic success and advanced social status, wives will often put pressure upon their husbands to contract additional marriages even when the husbands are quite satisfied with the *status quo*.

In spite of all these factors, the possibilities for jealousy and for quarrels between plural spouses are still so strong that nearly all the societies which approve plural marriage go to great lengths to define the relative status and marital rights and duties of spouses. In both polygynous and polyandrous families there is normally a head wife or head husband who dominates the spouses of the same sex and organizes their activities. In many cases this individual is the only real spouse, the other partners of the same sex ranking as concubines or *cicisbei*. In polygynous families it is also a frequent pattern for the husband to spend one day and night in succession with each of the wives, infraction of this rule being punishable as adultery. Property rights within the family, especially as between husbands and wives, also tend to be delimited with great clarity. Lastly, wives are often allowed a right of veto over a husband's plural marriages to insure the creation of a congenial group of spouses who will be able to live and work together with a minimum of friction. All in all, polygynous patterns require an elaboration of formal organization which exceeds that needed even for extended consanguine groups and which is quite foreign to our own concepts of the conjugal family.

It may be added that polygynous patterns do not operate to provide males with any great advantage. Although they may allow somewhat more leeway for the satisfaction of the male's roving sexual interests, the man who will bring a new wife into the family in the face of his established wife's opposition must possess reckless courage. No matter what the public patterns of family life may be, the private patterns seem to be much the same in all societies; most wives know how to reduce their husbands to submission. The husband of several wives inevitably finds himself caught on the horns of a dilemma. Either his wives cannot agree or they agree too well. In the first case he is subjected to multiple, conflicting pressures which leave him no peace. In the second, the wives and children tend to form a closed group from which he is largely excluded.

The main reason for devoting so much space to the polygynous family is that suggestions for the legalizations of polygyny in our own society have been made from time to time. They were frequent immediately after the First World War and may be anticipated following the Second. The reason most commonly advanced is the need of maintaining the population level in the face of war losses. Actually, even severe modern wars rarely result in the destruction of a large enough percentage of



males to produce a serious imbalance in the numbers of the two sexes. In modern Western societies, with their well-nigh universal practice of birth control, the numerical losses entailed through the failure of certain women of a war generation to find husbands can easily be made up by a voluntary increase in the number of children produced by those who do. Whether such an increase will occur now that the Second World War has ended is bound up with possibilities of economic and social reform which are beyond the scope of this essay. Wars are more significant for reducing the quality than the quantity of potential husbands, but even at that their adverse genetic effects are likely to be overrated. Only a few of the defects which debar men from military service and none of the injuries received in its course are hereditary. The real problem is less that of providing for the sexual and psychological needs of women who cannot find husbands than that of providing for women who will not be satisfied with second- or third-rate husbands. It seems inevitable that the number of the latter group of women will be increased by the development of independence and self-confidence in those whom the war has brought into responsible and well-paid positions ordinarily preempted by men.

How far legalized polygyny would meet these needs in our own society is an open question. We have seen that where it functions smoothly in other societies it is able to do so mainly because of the presence of particular patterns of early conditioning and internal familial organization. Neither of these is present in our own society, and both would require some time for their development. Even if we ignore the strong religious sanctions with which monogamy has come to be surrounded, it is so thoroughly integrated into our social and psychological patterns that any formal departure from it would create serious maladjustments. In particular, our present small families, with their high degree of social isolation and of emotional interdependence between the members, tend to create a personality configuration totally unsuited to polygynous institutions. Individuals who have learned to focus all their emotional attachments and feelings of dependency upon a single parent of the opposite sex will tend to do the same with a spouse and to find any sharing of a spouse a direct threat to their whole security system.

Against this must be placed the fact that membership in a polygynous family would provide women with the best method so far devised for combining domesticity with a career. This is not a mere conjecture, since polygynous institutions operate successfully in these terms in many societies which permit women to engage in business. In those societies the plural wives either take turns at housekeeping and child tending or delegate these duties to some one wife who has a flair for domesticity. In either case, the children receive better care than they could get from servants, the households are under responsible supervision, and there is

still time and energy available for outside activities. If polygynous institutions do achieve recognition in our society, they are more likely to originate in the reluctance of women to return to the limited sphere of housekeeping and baby tending after they have experienced the more stimulating life outside the home than they are to stem from a lack of potential husbands. Whether such freedom and increased opportunity would compensate psychologically for the sharing of a husband, even a highly desirable one, would depend largely upon the personalities of the women involved.

These speculations regarding the possible role of polygyny in our society are probably idle. There is no pressing need for it in terms of group perpetuation even in the present world situation, and its formal recognition would do violence to many of our most strongly entrenched mores. Even if it should sometime come to be permitted, the probabilities are that the bulk of American and western European populations will continue to be monogamous for many generations to come. Changes in such a basic aspect of social organization as family structure cannot be imposed suddenly or by legislative fiat. They can only come about through a series of small but cumulative modifications in habits and attitudes. The family of the future will be a direct outgrowth of present familial conditions and trends, and in order to predict its possible forms it is necessary to have an understanding of the current situation.

The outstanding feature of this situation is the almost complete breakdown of the consanguine family as a functional unit. Although the western European consanguine grouping has never dominated the conjugal one, its potentialities for function and its claims on the individual were much stronger even a hundred years ago than they are today. This breakdown seems to be directly correlated with the increased opportunities for both spacial and social mobility which have been created by the current technological revolution. A strong consanguine family organization provides its members with a high degree of economic security, but it also imposes many obligations. When the value of this security becomes less than the handicap imposed on the individual by the associated obligations, he is willing to sacrifice the former in order to avoid the latter. Colloquially speaking, when a man can do better without relatives than with them, he will tend to ignore the ties of kinship.

The unparalleled expansion of western European and American economy in the past century, with the wealth of individual opportunity which it has produced, has struck at the very roots of consanguine family organization. Moreover, the increase in spacial mobility which came with the opening of new areas to settlement and the development of modern methods of transportation made it easy for the ambitious individual to sever his kin ties by the simple process of moving away. At present the consanguine family retains its functions only in long-settled

rural districts and in the case of a few capitalist dynasties. In both instances the advantages of membership outweigh the disadvantages. The average city dweller recognizes his extended ties of relationship only in the sending of Christmas cards and in the occasional practice of hospitality to visiting kin.

In spite of this extreme degeneration, it is possible that certain factors quite external to family structure may reverse the present trends. If the social crystallization which now appears to be under way continues, the next few generations will see a marked decrease in individual opportunity. Extended family membership may again become economically valuable, although the value is likely to lie less in joint claims on property than in access to jobs. There is already a strong tendency to make membership in many craft unions hereditary, and the same trend can be observed with respect to the more remunerative executive positions in organizations which are shielded from the threat of active competition. It is also conceivable that the growth of bureaucracy will be accompanied by a growth of nepotism, this trend being most probable in the case of one-party rule of the fascist sort. The consanguine type of family organization, therefore, may simply be in abeyance at present and may play a more important role in the not too remote future.

Whatever these future possibilities may be, the current breakdown of consanguine organization has had significant repercussions on the conjugal family. Historically, the presence of the consanguine groups has tended to reinforce rather than to weaken marriage ties. European mores have stressed the continuity of matings, and the separation of partners has been felt as a disgrace by their kindred. As long as kin ties were strong and associations close, the consanguine group could bring heavy pressure to bear on its members. With the weakening of these ties the pressure has been correspondingly reduced. Partners can now separate without fear of effective punishment by their kin and without loss of the already almost non-existent advantages of consanguine family membership.

Another factor, closely comparable in its results, is the increasing anonymity of individuals and conjugal family groups in modern urban society. The disapproval with which other members of a small, closely knit community viewed separation was a deterrent almost as strong as the disapproval of kin. Although it might not entail the same economic penalties, the prospect of social ostracism was enough to daunt all but the bravest. In the modern urban community, with its diffuse and casual social relationships, community pressure toward maintenance of the marriage ties has almost ceased to exist. The former friend who disapproves of such conduct can be avoided, and most of the individuals with whom the offender comes in contact will not even know that the offense has been committed.

Breakdowns of kin ties and of the close social integration of individuals and conjugal family groups are no new thing in history. They were an accompaniment of urbanization and suddenly increased spacial mobility in ancient as well as modern civilization. Nevertheless, there is another factor in the present situation which, if it is not altogether new, is at least of unprecedented importance. This is the progressive diminution of the economic dependence of spouses upon each other. Although in the ancient urban civilizations women of the aristocratic group, inheriting and owning property in their own right, could live in comfort without husbands, the ordinary family still depended upon a rigid division of labor. Spouses living in a Roman slum were almost as dependent upon each other for their creature comforts as spouses living on an isolated farm. Extra-familial substitutes for what were ordinarily domestic services were available only to the wealthy, and opportunities for a single woman to support herself by her own labor were so limited and so unremunerative that they would be turned to only as a last resort.

In the modern urban community the delicatessen, the steam laundry, ready-made clothes, and above all the opening to women of attractive and well-paid occupations have done more to undermine the sanctity of marriage than has any conceivable loss of faith in its religious sanctions. Under present conditions, adult men and women are at last in a position to satisfy their basic needs in the absence of any sort of familial association, either conjugal or consanguine. In the anonymity of city life and with the development of effective techniques for contraception even the sexual needs of both can be met without entering into permanent unions or entailing serious penalties. The revolutionary effect of these developments upon the family as an institution can scarcely be overrated.

Since the rise of modern civilization has stripped the family of so many of the functions which once reinforced the bond between spouses, it may well be questioned whether this unit is still necessary in a "brave new world." It is the writer's firm belief that at least the conjugal type of family will be necessary and will survive. This is based upon the presence of still other functions associated with subtler needs of the individual and of society as a whole. In spite of the steady intrusion of extra-familial institutions such as the day nursery and school into the family's basic function of child rearing, it still remains the best agency for the care and especially for the socialization of the young child. There is good evidence that the proper development of the infant requires not only the satisfaction of its physical needs but also personalized attention, love, and response. These cannot be provided in adequate measure by any institution of the asylum sort. Children reared under the mass-production conditions inevitable in such institutions rarely show normal personality development and usually have great difficulty in adapting themselves to the conditions of adult life. In short, the perpetuation of our

society would seem to require the perpetuation of the family institution.

How this perpetuation is to be achieved in the absence of most of the external pressures toward continuity of matings is another question. The simplest and most obvious answer is the application of additional social and legal pressures, but the effectiveness of such punitive measures is questionable, to put it mildly. Informal social pressure, always the most effective, is largely ruled out by the conditions of modern urban life. Legal pressure, such as the extreme step of prohibiting divorce, could accomplish its purpose only if supported by a unified public opinion. Otherwise, the law would be more honored in the breach than in the observance, as our recent experience with prohibition has shown. Under present conditions the only effect of outlawing divorce would be to destroy what little influence legal and religious sanctions may still exert toward perpetuating marriages. Extra-legal partnerships would simply become the rule rather than the exception, and the attempt to prevent these by further legal measures would result in an intolerable situation. Moreover, insistence on the continued marriage and cohabitation of individuals who are hopelessly incompatible is fatal to the successful performance of even the surviving functions of the family. Not only are the spouses deprived of any opportunity to establish relationships in which they can satisfy their needs for affection and response, but the environment in which any accidental offspring have to be reared is, if anything, worse than a purely institutional one. It can be said with a good deal of certainty that the legalistic approach to this problem is quite inadequate. It is indeed justifiable to tighten divorce laws to the point where momentary pique will be ruled out as a cause for separation, but any restrictions beyond this point are likely to do more harm than good in the long run.

The best approach would seem to lie in the frank recognition that the basic function of the family today is that of satisfying the psychological needs of the individuals who enter the marital relationship. These needs may be summarized as those for affection, for security, and for perfected emotional response. The need for sexual satisfaction, basic as it is, has become less important under modern conditions, and the extreme attention devoted to it by some of the current writers on marriage must be considered as a reflection of one of the peculiar orientations of our culture. Around this physiological function we have erected a superstructure of taboos and have developed an intensity of interest probably unequalled by any other society. Although active sexual incompatibility is fatal to the marital relationship, any psychologist knows how frequently it is a symptom rather than a cause of tension between spouses.

It happens that the conditions of modern society are such as to increase the compulsive quality of the psychological needs which can best be satisfied by marriage. Childhood experience in small families of the

modern type conditions the individual to a focusing of emotional attachments and feelings of dependence upon a single person. With this is linked the relative social isolation of most adults in an urban environment. Under such conditions the desire for a partner who can satisfy these needs becomes doubly strong. It is clearly reflected in the present exaggerated development of the concept of romantic love.

It is unnecessary to trace the history of romantic love. Suffice it to say that the idea originated as a justification for extra-marital relationships in a time and place in which arranged marriages were the rule. It was only at a comparatively late date that the romantic lover came to be identified with a real or even potential spouse. In fact the early Courts of Love ruled that romantic attachment was impossible between husband and wife. From its inception the concept embodied the idea that there was one and only one perfect romantic partner for each individual and that this partner could be recognized even on first meeting by a subjective test. Unfortunately such a subjective test is less valid for the choice of spouses than of lovers. Sudden emotional response may stem from nothing more basic than an item of behavior or appearance which causes the new acquaintance to be subconsciously equated with a parent or other source of childhood pleasure or security. Though this equation may produce an immediate release of tensions, it also rouses expectations which can rarely be fulfilled in the marriage relationship and thus lays a foundation for later disappointment and bitterness. That sudden romantic attachment is not the best possible basis for marriage is abundantly proved by the number of romantically engendered marriages that end in the divorce court.

In all societies the most satisfactory and enduring partnerships are those which are entered into after due deliberation and without too high expectations. These are, typically, the attitudes of mature, experienced individuals who have learned certain things the hard way. In spite of the occasional cases of incurable romantics or delayed adolescents, marriages which are contracted in middle age or survive until middle age tend to be exceedingly stable in all societies. The real problem is that of providing young adults with the knowledge and especially with the point of view required for the intelligent selection of permanent partners. It is taken for granted that, at least for some generations to come, they will do the selecting themselves. Efforts of their elders to do this for them have never been very successful and would have little chance of succeeding under modern conditions.

There appear to be two possible solutions to this problem. The first, based on instruction, requires that the needs which marriage may be expected to satisfy be brought into full consciousness. So as long as the enduring needs for congeniality and placid companionship are ignored or deprecated, their importance is likely to be obscured by desires for

immediate sexual satisfaction, for independence from the original family group, or for economic security. In view of our current mythology on love and marriage such a change in emphasis will be difficult to bring about. However, the increasing understanding of mental and emotional processes which is being achieved by psychologists and the gradual spread of this knowledge to the general population should make it possible in the long run.

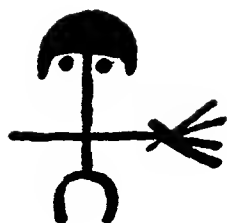
The second solution, and one already adopted by many societies, is to permit adolescents to gain the experience and knowledge which make for the intelligent selection of a spouse through a series of matings which are frankly transitory. Although this system is repugnant to our formal mores, it must be admitted that it seems to work well in those groups where adolescent experimentation in partnerships is institutionalized. Marriages contracted after such experimentation tend to be stable and emotionally satisfying to the participants. That there is a fairly strong trend in this direction in our own society cannot be denied. This fact is highly disturbing to the moralists, but the alternative is hardly less so. If we insist on marriage as a preliminary to all mating, while leaving the selection of partners to romantic chance, we may expect an increasing brittleness of young marriages as the former religious, social, and especially economic sanctions for the relationship progressively lose their force.

With the passing of the conditions which made almost any sort of marriage preferable to its alternatives, the permanence of marriage will inevitably depend more and more on the successful adjustment of spouses to each other. It may be possible, in some remote future, to assure the lifelong permanence of first matings by some system of preliminary training and supervision. Meanwhile, the current increase in divorce need not give us great concern. Divorce statistics are no guide to the number of really successful marriages in a community. No one would conclude that the sharp decline in the divorce rate during the late depression was an indication that more husbands and wives were happy together at that time than before or after. There are probably as many happy marriages today as there ever have been, the only difference being that unhappy partners are now in a better position to do something about it. A marriage which does not satisfy the needs of the partners is non-functional, and in a modern world there is little reason for insisting on its continuation. Easy divorce is no threat to happy marriages; it may even increase their number by giving individuals an opportunity to rectify their mistakes in new partnerships. A congenial marriage can provide more contentment and emotional security than any other human relationship, and in a world in flux these are becoming increasingly important to individual happiness. A union which provides them needs no formal sanctions or external pressures to insure its continuity.

The ancient trinity of father, mother, and child has survived more vicissitudes than any other human relationship. It is the bedrock underlying all other family structures. Although more elaborate family patterns can be broken from without or may even collapse of their own weight, the rock remains. In the *Gotterdammerung* which over-wise science and over-foolish statesmanship are preparing for us, the last man will spend his last hours searching for his wife and child.



## 18 Family Stability in Non-European Cultures



George P. Murdock

THREE GOOD REASONS MAY BE GIVEN FOR THE INCLUSION OF THIS ESSAY AND the first is that it may serve to introduce to the reader the work of George Peter Murdock who, agree with him or not, has been a major influence in the development of American anthropology during the past few decades.

*A second reason has to do with the substance of the article. We may begin by noting that criticisms of American society frequently place at least part of the blame for what are considered undesirable conditions on the fragility of marriage, which is considered manifest in the high divorce rate. Such statements usually imply that a high divorce rate is an unparalleled phenomenon indicating moral failure and community breakdown. The evidence presented by Murdock indicates that relative to other cultures the United States has a moderate divorce rate. Since some cultures with much greater frequency of divorce show few if any signs of the dislocations previously referred to, it seems reasonable to conclude that divorce, by itself, is not a powerful cause of social ill. Whether or not the reader's opinion about divorce is affected by this*

SOURCE: *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 272 (1950), pp. 195-201. Reprinted with the permission of the author and the publisher.

George Peter Murdock (b. 1897) is Mellon Professor of Anthropology at the University of Pittsburgh. As a Professor of Anthropology at Yale, Murdock played a major role in the founding of the Human Relations Area Files. He has done field-work among American Indians, in Micronesia, and in a small community in Connecticut. Among his works are *Social Structure* (1949, now available in paperback), *Africa* (1959), and *Culture and Society* (1965).

article, it should cause him to think critically about sociological generalizations.

A final motive for including this article is the desire to introduce the reader to the *Human Relations Area Files (HRAF)*, which is simultaneously a research tool and a storehouse of usefully classified ethnographic data. HRAF is centered at Yale University in New Haven, but supplies facsimile files to various libraries by subscription. Since 1961 HRAF has been supplemented by the "Ethnographic Atlas," a regular feature of *Ethnology*, a journal established by Professor Murdock. A recent issue (VI:2, 1967) was devoted to summarizing data for 862 societies.

This paper presents the conclusions of a special study of the stability of marriage in forty selected non-European societies undertaken in an attempt to place the family situation in the contemporary United States in cross-cultural perspective. Eight societies were chosen from each of the world's major ethnographic regions—Asia, Africa, Oceania, and native North and South America. Within each region the samples were carefully selected from widely scattered geographical locations, from different culture areas, and from levels of civilization ranging from the simplest to the most complex. The data were obtained from the collections in the Human Relations Area Files, formerly the Cross-Cultural Survey. The selection was made in as random a manner as possible except that it was confined to cultures for which the descriptive literature is full and reliable. Once chosen, a particular society was rejected and another substituted only in a few instances where the sources failed to provide (1) information on the relative rights of the two sexes in divorce, or (2) evidence permitting a solid judgment as to the degree of family stability relative to that in our own society.

### *Societies in Sample*

The method, it is believed, comes as close to that of purely random sampling as is feasible today in comparative social sciences. The results, it must be admitted, contain a number of surprises—even to the writer, who has been steeped for years in the literature of world ethnography. The forty selected societies are listed and located below.

*Asia:* the Chukchi of northeastern Siberia, the Japanese, the Kazak of Turkestan, the Kurd of Iraq, the Lakher of Assam, the Mongols of Outer Mongolia, the Semang Negritos of Malaya, and the Toda of south-eastern India.

*Africa:* the Dahomeans of coastal West Africa, the Ganda of Uganda, the Hottentot of South-West Africa, the Jukun of Northern Nigeria, the Lamba of Northern Rhodesia, the Lango of Kenya, the Siwans of the oasis of Siwa in Egypt, and the Wolof of Senegal.

*Oceania*: the Atayal aborigines of interior Formosa, the Balinese of Indonesia, the Kalinga of the northern Philippines, the Kurtatchi of the Solomon Islands in Melanesia, the Kwoma of New Guinea, the Murngin of northern Australia, the Samoans of Polynesia, and the Trukese of Micronesia.

*North America*: the Aztecs of ancient Mexico, the Creek of Alabama, the Crow of the high plains in Montana, the Haida of northern British Columbia and southern Alaska, the Hopi pueblo-dwellers of Arizona, the Iroquois of northern New York, the Klamath of interior Oregon, and the Yurok of coastal California.

*South America*: the Cuna of southern Panama, the Guaycuru or Mbaya of the Gran Chaco, the Incas of ancient Peru, the Kiangang of southern Brazil, the Macusi of Guiana, the Ona of Tierra del Fuego, the Siriono of lowland Bolivia, and the Witoto of the northwest Amazonian jungle.

From these cases it emerges, as a first conclusion, that practically all societies make some cultural provision for the termination of marriage through divorce. The Incas stand isolated as the solitary exception; among them a marriage, once contracted in the presence of a high official representing the emperor, could not subsequently be dissolved for any reason. None of the other thirty-nine societies in our sample compels a couple to maintain their matrimonial relationship where there are reasons for separation that would impress most contemporary Americans as genuinely cogent.

### *Divorce Rights—by Sex*

Perhaps the most striking conclusion from the study is the extraordinary extent to which human societies accord to both sexes an approximately equal right to initiate divorce. In thirty of the forty cultures surveyed it was impossible to detect any substantial difference in the rights of men and women to terminate an unsatisfactory alliance. The stereotype of the oppressed aboriginal woman proved to be a complete myth.

The author expected, in line with general thought on this subject, that males would be found to enjoy superior, though perhaps not exclusive, rights in a substantial minority of the cultures surveyed, if not in a majority. They were discovered to possess such prerogatives, however, in only six societies—a bare 15 per cent of the total. In two of the Moslem societies, the Kurd and the Siwans, a husband can dismiss his wife with the greatest of ease, even for a momentary whim. He needs only to pick up three stones and drop them, uttering to his spouse a routine formula of divorce. She has no comparable right; she can only run away and hope that her male relatives will support her. Among the Japanese, divorce is

very easy for the husband or by mutual consent, but can be obtained by a woman against the will of her spouse only for serious cause and with considerable legal difficulty. A Ganda man, too, is free to dismiss his wife for any cause, whereas she has no right to initiate a permanent separation. If severely mistreated she can only run away to her male relatives, to whom the husband must justify himself and make amends in order to get her back. For the Siriono it is reported that only men, never women, initiate divorce. A Guaycuru man who wants to terminate his marriage for any reason merely removes for a few days to another hut in the same village, until his wife takes the hint and returns to her family. Women rarely seek a divorce directly, but not infrequently they deliberately act in such a manner as to provoke their husbands into leaving them.

In four societies, or 10 per cent of the total sample, women actually possess superior privileges as regards divorce. Among the Kwoma a wife is relatively free to abandon her husband, but he has no right to dismiss her. His only recourse is to make life so miserable for her that she will leave of her own accord. In the stable form of Dahomean marriage, i.e., that characterized by patrilocal residence and the payment of a bride price, a woman can readily desert her husband for cause, but he cannot initiate divorce proceedings directly; he can only neglect his wife, insult her relatives, and subject her to petty annoyances until she takes matters into her own hands and departs. A Yurok marriage can be terminated at the initiative of either partner, but it involves the return of a substantial bride price. A wife is in a much better position to persuade her male relatives of the justice of her cause than is her husband. His claims are scrutinized with great skepticism, and are often rejected. While in theory he could still agree to an uncompensated separation, no male in his right mind in this highly pecuniary culture would think of incurring voluntarily such a financial loss. A Witoto woman can secure a divorce by merely running away. In such a case the husband is always blamed, because people assume that no woman would leave her male protector unless cruelly mistreated. A man can dismiss his wife for cause, but this makes him a target of damaging ridicule and gossip, and unless he is able to justify his action to the complete satisfaction of the local council of adult men, he becomes a virtual social outcast.

### *Frequency of Divorce—by Society*

Analysis of the relative frequency of divorce reveals that, in addition to the Incas, the stability of marital unions is noticeably greater than in our society among Atayal, Aztecs, Creek, Dahomeans, Ganda, Hopi, Hottentot, Jukun, Kazak, Lakher, Lango, Murngin Ona, Siriono, and Witoto. In the remaining twenty-four societies, constituting 60 per cent

of the total, the divorce rate manifestly exceeds that among ourselves. Despite the widespread alarm about increasing "family disorganization" in our own society, the comparative evidence makes it clear that we still remain well within the limits which human experience has shown that societies can tolerate with safety.

In most of the societies with relatively infrequent divorce, the stability is achieved through the mores and the pressure of public opinion rather than through legal enactments and judicial obstacles. The Atayal, Aztecs, and Hottentot constitute partial exceptions. In the first of these tribes divorce is freely allowed for childlessness, but petitions on any other grounds must receive a hearing before the chief. He may refuse or grant the divorce, but in the latter case he usually sentences the guilty party to punishment and may even forbid him or her to remarry. Any other separation is likely to precipitate a feud between the families of the estranged spouses. Among the Aztecs, divorce cases were heard before a special court, and the party adjudged guilty forfeited half of his property to the other. Among the Hottentot, adequate grounds for a divorce have to be proved to the satisfaction of a council consisting of all the adult men of the clan, which may order a runaway wife to return to her husband, or award the property of a deserting husband to his wife.

In only two of the societies with frequent divorce is separation effected by the action of constituted authorities—by village officials among the Balinese and by the courts in an action brought by a Japanese woman. Except in these five societies and the Incas, divorce is everywhere exclusively a private matter, and such restraints as are exercised are imposed by informal social pressures rather than by legal restrictions.

### *Stabilizing Devices*

The cases reveal clearly some of the devices whereby different peoples have attempted to make marital unions more stable. One of the most common is the payment of a bride price, which comparative studies have shown to be customary among approximately half of the societies of the earth. Contrary to the popular impression, the bride price is almost never conceived as a payment for a purchased chattel. Its primary function nearly everywhere is that of providing an additional economic incentive to reinforce the stability of marriage. In our sample, the sources on Dahomeans, Klamath, Lango, Mongols, Wolof, and Yurok reveal particularly clear evidence of the stabilizing effect of the bride price.

An even more frequent device is to take the choice of a marital partner largely out of the hands of young men and women and vest it in their parents. Most cultures reflect a marked distrust of sexual attraction as a primary motive in marriage, as it is likely to be in the minds of

young people, and it seems to be widely recognized that parents, with their greater worldly experience, are more likely to arrange matches on the basis of factors better calculated to produce a durable union. Having been responsible for a marriage, parents tend to feel humiliated when it shows signs of breaking up, and are likely to exert themselves to restore harmony and settle differences. This is attested very specifically for the Haida and the Iroquois, and the evidence shows that the influence of relatives is also a prominent stabilizing factor among Creek, Hopi, Jukun, Kalinga, Murngin, and Ona.

The lengths to which this precaution can be carried in cases of infidelity is well illustrated by the Jukun. A wife first attempts to persuade her husband to give up an adulterous relationship about which she has learned, whereas the husband in a similar situation merely requests a relative or friend to remonstrate with his wife. If the relationship still continues, the innocent spouse reports the matter to the father, uncle, or elder brother of the other, who exerts all the pressure in his power to bring the delinquency to an end. Only after these steps prove fruitless, and the infidelity continues, is a separation effected.

Occasionally, of course, relatives break up a union that is satisfactory to both the parties primarily concerned. Among the Chukchi, for example, the parents of the groom can send the bride home if they become dissatisfied with her at any time within a year or eighteen months after the wedding, and a woman's relatives attempt to break up her marriage if they become estranged from her husband's family at any time, even going to the extreme of carrying off the unwilling wife by force.

In one of the societies of the sample—the Crow Indians—public opinion, instead of exerting its usual stabilizing influence, actually tends to undermine the marital relationship. Divorce is exceedingly frequent, and a man subjects himself to ridicule if he lives too long with one woman. Rivalrous military societies make a sport of stealing wives from one another, and any husband feels ashamed to take back a wife thus abducted from him, however much against her will and his own.

### *Incidence of Divorce*

The sources rarely give precise statistics on the incidence of divorce in societies where it occurs most frequently. All we have is fragmentary statements, for instance, that one-third of all adult Chukchi women have been divorced, or that the ethnographer encountered Cuna of both sexes who have lived through from seven to nine successive marriages, or that it is not uncommon to meet a Siwan woman of forty who has been married and divorced more than ten times.

It is nevertheless possible to segregate one group of societies in which the excessive frequency of divorce is confined to recently con-

tracted marriages and dwindles to a rarity after a union has endured for a year or more, especially after children have been born. This is attested for example, among the Japanese, the Kaingang, the Kalinga, and the Macusi. Among the Trukese, marriages are very brittle and shifting with people in their twenties, but by the end of this period of trial and error the majority have found spouses with whom they are content to live in reasonable harmony for the rest of their lives.

In other societies, like the Semang, while the rate of divorce subsides markedly after the birth of children, it still remains high as compared with our own. All in all, the sample reveals nineteen societies, or nearly half of the total, in which permanent separations appear substantially to exceed the present rate in the United States throughout the lifetime of the individual. Among them, either spouse can terminate the union with little difficulty and for slight or even trivial reasons among Balinese, Chukchi, Crow, Cuna, Haida, Iroquois, Klamath, Kurtatchi, Lamba, Mongols, Samoans, Semang, Toda, and Wolof. In matrilocal communities like the Cuna or the Iroquois the husband simply walks out, or the wife unceremoniously dumps his effects outside her door. It is more surprising to encounter an equal facility in divorce among patrilocal and even patriarchal peoples like the Mongols, who see no reason for moral censure in divorce and say in perfectly matter-of-fact manner that two individuals who cannot get along harmoniously together had better live apart.

### *Grounds for Divorce*

The societies which condone separation for a mere whim are few. The great majority recognize only certain grounds as adequate. The Lamba, for whom the information is particularly full, consider a man justified in seeking a divorce if he has been continually harassed by his parents-in-law, if his wife commits adultery or theft, if she has contracted a loathsome disease, if she is quarrelsome or disrespectful, or if she refuses to remain at his home after he has taken a second wife. For a woman the recognized grounds are impotence or loathsome disease in her spouse, his failure to prepare a garden or provide her with adequate clothing, persistent wife-beating, or mere cessation of her affection for him. If the marriage produces no issue, husband and wife argue as to who is responsible, and usually agree to separate. If the woman then bears a child to her new husband whereas the man fails to produce offspring by his next wife, the former husband is so overcome with shame that he usually either commits suicide or leaves the community.

Particular societies recognize interesting special grounds as adequate. Thus the Aztecs, who strongly disapproved of divorce and required proof of substantial cause before a special court, readily granted separation to a woman if she showed that her husband had done less than his share in

attending to the education of their children. In general, however, a few basic reasons recur repeatedly as those considered justifiable in a wide range of societies. These are incompatibility, adultery, barrenness or sterility, impotence or frigidity, economic incapacity or nonsupport, cruelty, and quarrelsomeness or nagging. Desertion rarely appears, because it is, of course, not usually a reason for divorce, but the actual means by which a permanent separation is effected. The degree to which the more widespread grounds are recognized as valid in the forty sample societies is shown in Table 1. In order to provide comparability, an entry is made under each heading for every society. Judgments that are merely inferred as probable from the general context, however, are distinguished from evidence specifically reported or unmistakably implied in the sources.

Table 1 REASONS FOR DIVORCE (Forty Sample Societies)

Reasons	Permitted				Forbidden			
	Definitely		Infer- entially		Definitely		Infer- entially	
	To Man	To Wife	To Man	To Wife	To Man	To Wife	To Man	To Wife
Any grounds, even trivial	9	6	5	6	14	13	12	15
Incompatibility, without more specific grounds	17	17	10	10	6	7	7	6
Common adultery or infidelity	19	11	8	12	8	10	5	7
Repeated or exaggerated infidelity	27	23	8	10	5	5	0	2
Childlessness or sterility	12	4	15	18	7	7	6	11
Sexual impotence or unwillingness	9	12	24	21	3	4	4	3
Laziness, non-support, economic incapacity	23	22	11	9	4	5	2	4
Quarrelsomeness or nagging	20	7	7	12	6	11	7	10
Mistreatment or cruelty	7	25	19	9	3	4	11	2

The data in Table 1 reinforce the earlier comment concerning the extraordinary equality of the sexes in rights of divorce revealed by the present study. Where the table shows notable differences, these have relatively obvious explanations. That cruelty is recognized as an adequate ground for women far more often than for men merely reflects their comparative physical strength. The aggression of women toward their spouses is thus perforce directed more often into verbal channels, with the result that quarrelsomeness and nagging become an adequate justification for divorce much more commonly for the male sex.



### *Concern over Divorce Problem*

The demonstration that divorce tends to be easier and more prevalent in other societies than in our own does not warrant the conclusion that most peoples are indifferent to the stability of the marriage relationship and the family institution. In our sample, such a charge might be leveled with some justification at the Crow, the Kaingang, and the Toda, but for most of the rest the data explicitly reveal a genuine concern with the problem. The devices of the bride price and the arrangement of marriages by parents, already alluded to, represent only two of the most common attempts to reach a satisfactory cultural solution. Others, demonstrated by the author in a previous study (*Social Structure*, 1949), may be briefly summarized here.

One such device is the taboo on primary incest, which is absolutely universal. There is not a single society known to history or ethnography which does not prohibit and penalize, among the general run of its members, both sexual intercourse and marriage between father and daughter, mother and son, and brother and sister. These universal prohibitions are understandable only as an adaptive provision, arrived at everywhere by a process of mass trial and error, by which sexual rivalry is inhibited within the nuclear family so that the unity and integrity of this basic institution are preserved for the performance of its crucial societal services—economic co-operation, sexual reproduction, and the rearing and education of children.

Nearly as universal are prohibitions of adultery. A very large majority of all known societies permit relatively free sexual experimentation before marriage in their youth of both sexes, but this license is withdrawn when they enter into matrimony. In a world-wide sample of 250 societies, only five—a mere 2 per cent of the total—were found to condone adulterous extramarital liaisons. In many of the remaining 98 per cent, to be sure, the ideal of marital fidelity is more honored in the breach than in the observance. Its very existence, nevertheless, can only reflect a genuine and widespread concern with the stability of marriage and the family, which are inevitably threatened by the jealousy and discord generated by infidelity.

It is clear that approximately as many peoples disapprove in theory of divorce as of adultery. They have learned through experience, however, that the reasons are commonly much more urgent for the former than for the latter, and they consequently allow it wider latitude. The vital functions of the family are not likely to be well performed where husband and wife have become genuinely incompatible. Children raised by stepparents, grandparents, or adoptive parents may frequently find their new social environment more conducive to healthy personality

development than a home torn by bitter internal conflict. Even though less desirable than an ideal parental home, since this is unattainable, divorce may represent for them, as for their parents, the lesser of two evils.

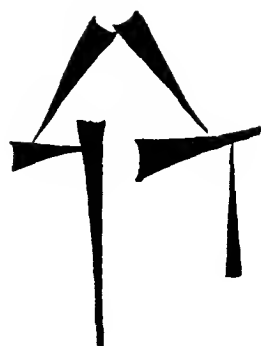
No society in our sample, with the possible exception of the Crow, places any positive value on divorce. The general attitude is clearly that it is regrettable, but often necessary. It represents merely a practical concession to the frailty of mankind, caught in a web of social relationships and cultural expectations that often impose intolerable pressure on the individual personality. That most social systems work as well as they do, despite concessions to the individual that appear excessive to us, is a tribute to human ingenuity and resiliency.

### *American Family Comparatively Stable*

The cross-cultural evidence makes it abundantly clear that the modern American family is unstable in only a relative and not an absolute sense. From an absolute, that is, comparative, point of view, our family institution still leans quite definitely toward the stable end of the ethnographic spectrum. Current trends could continue without reversal for a considerable period before the fear of social disorganization would acquire genuine justification. Long before such a point is reached, however, automatic correctives, some of them already apparent, will have wrought their effect, and a state of relative equilibrium will be attained that will represent a satisfactory social adjustment under the changed conditions of the times.

# 19 Classificatory Systems of Relationship

Alfred L. Kroeber



ONCE BEGUN, THE STUDY OF KINSHIP SYSTEMS BECAME A VITAL PART OF anthropology. Fieldworkers collected terminologies not only for their obvious comparative value or the insights which the terminology gave into the behavior and relations of the local populace, but also because the technique of collecting kin terms, the genealogical method, provided entrée into the society and furnished a topic of inquiry which hardly ever arouses anxiety or resentment.

Among the earliest general contributions to the search for regularities underlying kin terminological systems was Kroeber's induction of eight principles which, in varying combinations, seemed to enter into the logical formulation of all known terminologies, and which explicitly contradicted certain of the contrasts which Morgan drew between "descriptive" and "classificatory" terminologies. Going further, Kroeber disputed the arguments of the British anthropologist Rivers, who maintained that kin terms reflected antecedent sociological conditions. The last paragraph of

SOURCE: *Journal of the [Royal] Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 39 (1909), pp. 77-84. Reprinted with the permission of the author and the publisher.

A prolific contributor to anthropology in most of its major facets, Professor Kroeber (1876-1960) is particularly well known for his early endorsement of the "super-organic" approach to culture, for his work in the difficult areas of "cultural configurations" and "style," and for his definitive work on the geographical analysis of the cultures of the Indians of North America. Among the many books from Kroeber's pen are *Cultural and Natural Areas of Native North America* (1939), *Configurations of Culture Growth* (1944), and *Style and Civilization* (1957). Some of Kroeber's major essays are collected in *The Nature of Culture* (1952).

*the following selection asserts that kin terms are primarily linguistic and psychological phenomena. In 1952, Kroeber reviewed much of his earlier work, including this article. He concluded by reasserting his conviction that the use of kin terminological analysis for sociological reconstruction was dangerous, but he berated himself for the unfortunate use of the word "psychological," which he later believed not what he really intended. He suggested instead that "as part of language, kin term systems reflect unconscious logic and conceptual patterning as well as social institutions." The matter is not yet completely resolved but theories of sociological causation are predominant in contemporary analyses. As for Kroeber's eight principles underlying the categorization of kin terms, for many serious scholars they have been supplemented by a shifting grid of principles in the method known as componential analysis (see II:20).*

The distinction between classificatory and descriptive systems of relationship has been widely accepted, and has found its way into handbooks and general literature. According to the prevalent belief the systems of certain nations or languages group together distinct relationships and call them by one name, and are therefore classifying. Other systems of consanguinity are said to indicate secondary differences of relationship by descriptive epithets added to their primary terms, and to be therefore descriptive.

Nothing can be more fallacious than this common view. A moment's reflection is sufficient to show that every language groups together under single designations many distinct degrees and kinds of relationship. Our word brother includes both the older and the younger brother and the brother of a man and of a woman. It therefore embraces or classifies four relationships. The English word cousin denotes both men and women cousins; cousins on the father's or on the mother's side; cousins descended from the parent's brother or the parent's sister; cousins respectively older or younger than one's self, or whose parents are respectively older or younger than the speaker's parents; and cousins of men or women. Thirty-two different relationships are therefore denoted by this one English word. If the term is not strictly limited to the significance of first cousin, the number of distinct ideas that is capable of expressing is many times thirty-two. Since then it is not only primitive people that classify or fail to distinguish relationships, the suspicion is justified that the current distinction between the two classes or systems of indicating relationship is subjective, and has its origin in the point of view of investigators, who, on approaching foreign languages, have been impressed with their failure to discriminate certain relationships between which the languages of civilized Europe distinguish, and who, in the enthusiasm of formulating general theories from such facts, have forgotten that their own languages are filled with entirely analogous groupings

or classifications which custom has made so familiar and natural that they are not felt as such.

The total number of different relationships which can be distinguished is very large, and reaches at least many hundred. No language possesses different terms for all of these or even for any considerable proportion of them. In one sense it is obvious that a language must be more classificatory as the number of its terms of relationship is smaller. The number of theoretically possible relationships remaining constant, there must be more ideas grouped under one term in proportion as the number of terms is less. Following the accepted understanding of what constitutes classificatory consanguinity, English, with its twenty terms of relationship, must be not less but more classificatory than the languages of all primitive people who happen to possess twenty-five, thirty, or more terms.

It is clear that if the phrase classificatory consanguinity is to have any meaning it must be sought in some more discriminating way. The single fact that another people group together various relationships which our language distinguishes does not make their system classificatory. If there is a general and fundamental difference between the systems of relationship of civilized and uncivilized people, its basis must be looked for in something more exact than the rough and ready expressions of subjective point of view that have been customary.

It is apparent that what we should try to deal with is not the hundreds or thousands of slightly varying relationships that are expressed or can be expressed by the various languages of man, but the principles or categories of relationship which underlie these. Eight such categories are discernible.

1. *The difference between persons of the same and of separate generations.* The distinctions between father and grandfather, between uncle and cousin, and between a person and his father, involve the recognition of this category.

2. *The difference between lineal and collateral relationship.* When the father and the father's brother are distinguished, this category is operative. When only one term is employed for brother and cousin, it is inoperative.

3. *Difference of age within one generation.* The frequent distinction between the older and the younger brother is an instance. In English this category is not operative.

4. *The sex of the relative.* This distinction is carried out so consistently by English, the one exception being the foreign word cousin, that the discrimination is likely to appear self-evident. By many people, however, many relationships are not distinguished for sex. Grandfather and grandmother, brother-in-law and sister-in-law, father-in-law, and

mother-in-law, and even such close relationships as son and daughter, are expressed respectively by single words.

5. *The sex of the speaker.* Unrepresented in English and most European languages, this category is well known to be of importance in many other languages. The father, mother, brother, sister, and more distant relatives may receive one designation from a man and another from his sister.

6. *The sex of the person through whom relationship exists.* English does not express this category. In consequence we frequently find it necessary to explain whether an uncle is a father's or a mother's brother, and whether a grandmother is paternal or maternal.

7. *The distinction of blood relatives from connections by marriage.* While this distinction is commonly expressed by most languages, there are occasional lapses; just as in familiar English speech the father-in-law is often spoken of as father. Not strictly within the domain of relationship, but analogous to the occasional failure to express this category, is the frequent ignoring on the part of primitive people of the difference between actual relatives and fictitious clan or tribal relatives.

8. *The condition of life of the person through whom relationship exists.* The relationship may be either of blood or by marriage; the person serving as the bond of relationship may be alive or dead, married or no longer married. Many North American Indians refrain from using such terms as father-in-law and mother-in-law after the wife's death or separation. Some go so far as to possess terms restricted to such severed relationship. It is natural that the uncle's relation to his orphaned nephew should tend to be somewhat different from his relation to the same boy while his natural protector, his father, was living. Distinct terms are therefore sometimes found for relatives of the uncle and aunt grouping after the death of a parent.

The subjoined table indicates the representation of the eight categories, and the degree to which they find expression, respectively in English and in several of the Indian languages of North America.

It appears that English gives expression to only four categories. With the exception, however, of the one and foreign word cousin, every term in English involves the recognition of each of these four categories. All the Indian languages express from six to eight categories. Almost all of them recognize seven. But in all the Indian languages the majority of the categories occurring are expressed in only part of the terms of relationship found in the language. There are seven Indian languages, such as Pawnee and Mohave, in which not a single one of the seven or eight categories finds expression in every term. While in English the degree of recognition which is accorded the represented categories is indicable by a percentage of 100 in all cases but one, when it is 95, in Pawnee corre-

	N.A. INDIAN						CALIFORNIA INDIAN						
	<i>English</i>	<i>Arapaho</i>	<i>Dakota</i>	<i>Pawnee</i>	<i>Skokomish</i>	<i>Clitook</i>	<i>Yuki</i>	<i>Pomo</i>	<i>Wasbo</i>	<i>Miwok</i>	<i>Yokuts</i>	<i>Luiseno</i>	<i>Mohave</i>
Number of terms	21 <sup>1</sup>	20	31	19	18	28	24	27	28	24	28	34	35
Generation	21	20	31	11	13	23	24	21	27	24	22	30	26
Blood or marriage	21	19	31	17	18	26	24	27	28	24	28	32	34
Lineal or collateral	21	10	20	5	11	25	24	21	28	18	26	34	28
Sex of relative	20	18	29	17	2	12	16	21	20	20	17	18	22
Sex of connecting relative	0	6	6	2	0	20	13	13	14	10	14	19	21
Sex of speaker	0	3	18	4	0	15	3	3	10	2	12	10	14
Age in generation	0	3	7	2	2	2	3	4	4	4	4	12	8
Condition of connecting relative	0	0	0	0	8	1	0	0	0	0	<sup>2</sup>	0	1

<sup>1</sup> All terms are omitted, such as great grandfather, great-uncle, and second-cousin, which are not generally used in ordinary speech and exist principally as a reserve available for specific discrimination on occasion.

<sup>2</sup> Terms denoting relatives by marriage undergo a vocalic change to indicate the death of the connecting relative.

sponding percentages range variously from about 10 to 90, and in Mohave from 5 to 95. All the other Indian languages, as compared with English, closely approach the condition of Pawnee and Mohave.

It is clear that this difference is real and fundamental. English is simple, consistent, and, so far as it goes, complete. The Indian systems of relationship all start from a more elaborate basis, but carry out their scheme less completely. This is inevitable from the fact that the total number of terms of relationship employed by them is approximately the same as in English. The addition of only one category to those found in English normally doubles the number of terms required to give full expression to the system; and the presence of three additional categories multiplies the possible total by about eight. As the number of terms occurring in any of the Indian languages under consideration is not much more than half greater than in English, and sometimes is not greater at all, it is clear that at least some of their categories must find only very partial expression.

In short, as far as the expression of possible categories is concerned, English is less complete than any of the Indian languages; but as regards the giving of expression to the categories which it recognizes, English is more complete. In potentiality, the English scheme is poorer and simpler; but from its own point of view it is both more complete and more consistent. As English may evidently be taken as representative of European languages, it is in this point that the real difference is to be

found between the systems that have been called classificatory and those that have been called descriptive.

The so-called descriptive systems express a small number of categories of relationship completely; the wrongly-named classificatory systems express a larger number of categories with less regularity. Judged from its own point of view, English is the less classificatory; looked at from the Indian point of view it is the more classificatory, inasmuch as in every one of its terms it fails to recognize certain distinctions often made in other languages; regarded from a general and comparative point of view, neither system is more or less classificatory.

In short, the prevalent idea of the classificatory system breaks down entirely under analysis. And in so far as there is a fundamental difference between the languages of European and of less civilized peoples in the method of denoting relationship, the difference can be determined only on the basis of the categories described and can be best expressed in terms of the categories.

The categories serve also to indicate the leading characteristics of systems of the same general order. It is obvious, for instance, that the most important difference between Dakota and Arapaho is the strong tendency of the former to recognize the sex of the speaker. Chinook is notable for laying more stress on the sex of the speaker and of the connecting relation than on the sex of the relative. General differences such as naturally occur between the languages of one region and of another can also be expressed in terms of the categories. All the California systems, for instance, lay much more stress upon the sex of the connecting relative than do any of the Plains languages examined. The Plains systems are conspicuous for their weak development of the distinction between lineal and collateral relationship, this finding expression in two-thirds of all cases in Dakota, half in Arapaho, one-fourth in Pawnee. In seven other California languages the corresponding values lie between three-fourths and complete expression. The method can be applied successfully even in the case of smaller and contiguous geographical areas. Of the seven California languages Luisiño and Mohave are spoken in southern California. Their systems show a unity as compared with the systems of the five languages from northern and central California. Both the southern California languages have a greater number of terms; both are stronger in the expression of the categories of the sex of the connecting relative and of age within the same generation; and both are weaker in the category of sex of the relative, than the others. Again, Chinook and Skokomish, both of the North Pacific Coast, are alike in indicating the condition of the connecting relative and in failing, on account of the possession of grammatical sex gender, to distinguish the sex of relatives themselves in many terms of relationship. There is a very deep-doing



difference between them, however, in the fact that Skokomish is as free as English from recognizing the sex of the speaker and of connecting relatives, while Chinook generally expresses both categories. In short, the categories present a means of comparing systems of terms of relationship along the basic lines of their structure and of expressing their similarities and differences without reference to individual terms or details.

The reason why the vague and unsatisfactory idea of a classificatory system of consanguinity has found such wide acceptance is not to be sought in any primary interest in designations of relationship as such, but in the fact that terms of relationship have usually been regarded principally as material from which conclusions as to the organization of society and conditions of marriage could be inferred. If it had been more clearly recognized that terms of relationship are determined primarily by linguistic factors and are only occasionally, and then indirectly, affected by social circumstances, it would probably long ago have been generally realized that the difference between descriptive and classificatory systems is subjective and superficial. Nothing is more precarious than the common method of deducing the recent existence of social or marital institutions from a designation of relationship. Even when the social condition agrees perfectly with expressions of relationship, it is unsafe to conclude without corroborative evidence that these expressions are a direct reflection or result of the condition.

In the Dakota language, according to Riggs, there is only one word for grandfather and father-in-law. Following the mode of reasoning sometimes employed, it might be deduced from this that these two relationships were once identical. Worked out to its implications, the absurd conclusion would be that marriage with the mother was once customary among the Sioux.

In the same language the words for woman's male cousin and for woman's brother-in-law have the same radical, differing only in a suffix. Similar reasoning would induce in this case that marriage of cousins was or had been the rule among the Sioux, a social condition utterly opposed to the basic principles of almost all Indian society.

The use of such identical or similar terms for distinct relationships is due to a considerable similarity between the relationships. A woman's male cousin and her brother-in-law are alike in sex, are both of opposite sex from the speaker, are of the same generation as herself, and are both collateral, so that they are similar under four categories. In view of the comparative paucity of terms as compared with possible relationships, it is entirely natural that the same word, or the same stem, should at times be used to denote two relationships having as much in common as these two.

No one would assume that the colloquial habit in modern English

of speaking of the brother-in-law as brother implies anything as to form of marriage, for logically the use of the term could only be an indication of sister marriage. It is easily conceivable that in the future development of English the more cumbersome of these two terms might come into complete disuse in daily life and the shorter take its place, without the least change in social or marital conditions.

The causes which determine the formation, choice, and similarities of terms of relationship are primarily linguistic. Whenever it is desired to regard terms of relationship as due to sociological causes and as indicative of social conditions, the burden of proof must be entirely with the propounder of such views.

Even the circumstances that the father's brother is frequently called father is not necessarily due to or connected with the custom of the Levirate; nor can group marriage be inferred from the circumstance that there is frequently no other term for mother's sister than mother. A woman and her sister are more alike than a woman and her brother, but the difference is conceptual, in other words linguistic, as well as sociological. It is true that a woman's sister can take her place in innumerable functions and relations in which a brother cannot; and yet a woman and her sister, being of the same sex, agree in one more category of relationship than the same woman and her brother, and are therefore more similar in relationship and more naturally denoted by the same term. There are so many cases where the expression of relationship cannot have been determined by sociological factors and must be purely psychological, as in the instances just discussed, that it is fair to require that the preference be given to the psychological cause, or that this be admitted as of at least probability, even in cases where either explanation is theoretically possible and supporting evidence is absent.

On the whole it is inherently very unlikely in any particular case that the use of identical terms for similar relationships can ever be connected with such special customs as the Levirate or group marriage. It is a much more conservative view to hold that such forms of linguistic expression and such conditions are both the outcome of the unalterable fact that certain relationships are more similar to one another than others. On the one hand this fact has led to certain sociological institutions; on the other hand, to psychological recognitions and their expression in language. To connect the institutions and the terms causally can rarely be anything but hazardous. It has been an unfortunate characteristic of the anthropology of recent years to seek in a great measure specific causes for specific events, connection between which can be established only through evidence that is subjectively selected. On wider knowledge and freedom from motive it is becoming increasingly apparent that causal explanations of detached anthropological phenomena can be but

rarely found in other detached phenomena, and that it is even difficult to specify the most general tendencies that actuate the forms taken by culture, as the immediate causes of particular phenomena.

The following conclusions may be drawn:

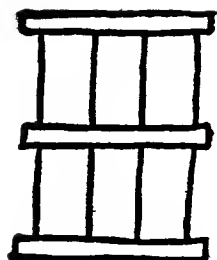
1. The generally accepted distinction between descriptive and classificatory systems of terms of relationship cannot be supported.

2. Systems of terms of relationship can be properly compared through an examination of the categories of relationship which they involve and of the degree to which they give expression to these categories.

3. The fundamental difference between systems of terms of relationship of Europeans and of American Indians is that the former express a smaller number of categories of relationship than the latter and express them more completely.

4. Terms of relationship reflect psychology, not sociology. They are determined primarily by language and can be utilized for sociological inferences only with extreme caution.

## 20 Componential Analysis<sup>1</sup>



Ward H. Goodenough

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS IS BASICALLY A SEMANTIC DEVICE FOR THE INVESTIGATION and ordering of logical systems. It is rooted in linguistic theory and has the closest ties to the cognitive approaches to which we have already been introduced (II:5 and 6). Although, as we have seen, it has been applied to many aspects of culture, its main use has been in conjunction with the logical analysis of kin terminological systems. The pioneering efforts were those of Ward Goodenough, who gave us its name, Floyd Lounsbury, who attempted to generate the rules underlying the Pawnee kin nomenclatural system, and others like Anthony F. C. Wallace (see II:48). Criticisms have not been lacking (see II:7). Had space been available, this volume would also have included a very perceptive article by Robbins Burling, provocatively titled, "Cognition and Componential Analysis: God's Truth or Hocus-Pocus?" At the crux of Burling's critique is the question: Is componential analysis a statement of "something 'out there' waiting to be described and recorded," a psychological reality

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Ward H. Goodenough (b. 1919) is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania and Curator of General Ethnology in the University Museum. He is the author of *Property, Kin and Community on Truk* (1951) and *Cooperation in Change* (1963), as well as editor of *Explorations in Cultural Anthropology* (1964). He is currently serving as editor of the *American Anthropologist*.

*in the heads of the culture bearers, or is it simply one of a number of possible rules that may be generated to account for data? Goodenough's clear exposition is useful not only for its straightforward presentation of the technique of componential analysis as applied to kinship, but also because it attempts to be responsive to criticisms such as those of Burling and Harris.*

What does a person need to have learned if he is to understand events in a strange community as its members understand them and if he is to conduct himself in ways that they accept as conforming to their expectations of one another? To describe the content of such a body of knowledge is to describe a community's culture, according to one of the several meanings anthropologists give this term.

As crucial as such description is, for anthropology and for behavioral science generally, systematic methods for accomplishing it have been slow to develop. Since 1950, however, anthropologists in the United States have been giving greater attention to the methodological problems involved and to their theoretical implications.

To describe a community's culture, in the above sense of the term, one must learn what people in the community have had to learn. To do this, one cannot and need not directly experience everything they have experienced from childhood on up, but one must participate as fully as possible in their activities, and one must learn how to communicate with them in their own language. Participation and communication are the channels through which every man learns his native culture, and any other culture. Anthropologists must learn in the same way. But they cannot just leave it at that, unselfconsciously and largely subconsciously acquiring a subjective feel for the rules of the game and for what it is their informants mean by the things they say. If they are to judge the reliability of one another's work, they must develop methods for making cultural learning a conscious exercise and for converting the product of this learning, which for other men is largely a subjective matter, into something that can be an object of scrutiny.

Inspiration to meet the challenge this poses has come largely from the accomplishments of linguistic science. Linguists are able to produce elegant and accurate representations of what one has to know in phonology and grammar if one is to speak particular languages acceptably by native standards. Their procedures enable them to replicate one another's work readily. Application of the basic strategies of descriptive linguistics to the problem of describing other facets of culture is helping to raise the standards of rigor in ethnographic description. These strategies include what is best described as contrastive analysis. Its use for describing how people classify phenomena, insofar as their classifications are

reflected in the vocabulary of their language, has led to the analytic method described here.

The categorizations of phenomena and events (the inventory of ideas) by which a community's members deal with one another and with their surroundings, and which are a major part of their culture, are represented largely, though far from completely, by the words and expressions in their language. People learn what these ideas are through the contextual associations they make with the words and expressions that signify the ideas. A child, for example, seems to form an idea of what *hot*, *car*, *love*, and *God* signify from the experiences he associates with their use, abstracting from these experiences a subjective feel for what others signify by these words. He tests its correctness as he uses the word himself, modifying his feel for what they signify until his own use of them corresponds closely enough with other people's use of them for most communication purposes. In this way he learns what he must know if the speech of his fellows is to be intelligible to him, and what he must use to guide his own speech if it is to be intelligible to others. In my own experience, much of my learning of other languages and cultures has followed a similar course. To me, the conclusion seems inescapable that reliable description of other cultures requires us to make this learning process an explicit part of ethnographic method and to try to develop canons for its systematic exploitation. Componential analysis is a method of descriptive semantics designed for this purpose.

To illustrate the method, I confine myself to kinship terminologies. Vocabulary for other kinds of subject matter is also amenable to analysis by this method, to judge from work by Harold C. Conklin, Charles O. Frake, and Einar Haugen. But it is with kinship terminology that the method has been mainly explored—among other reasons, because the long history of anthropological concern with kinship study has produced a reasonably satisfactory notation for handling kinship data and has also produced a preliminary sorting-out of some of the conceptual criteria that seem to be operative in many kinship terminologies.

### *Componential Analysis and Descriptive Semantics*

Following C. W. Morris, we may say that a linguistic expression *designates* a class of concepts; it *denotes* a specific image or subclass of images within the class on any one occasion of its use; and it *signifies* the criteria by which specific images or concepts are to be included or excluded from the class of images or concepts that the expression designates. What are signified, then, are the definitive attributes of the class, the ideational components out of which the class is formed. An expression *connotes* other images or concepts that people associate with the

expression's designatum, and from them people orient themselves affectively and behaviorally; but these connoted images or concepts are not themselves definitive attributes of the designated class. People may agree closely on the definitive attributes—on what is signified—yet disagree markedly on what is connoted or implied.

Componential analysis deals only with signification—with definitive attributes and the ways in which they combine and are mutually ordered.<sup>2</sup> It differs, therefore, from most other approaches to semantic analysis, which focus on connotation—the “semantic differential” technique of C. E. Osgood, for example. Behavioral and social scientists have been concerned mainly with problems in which connotation is the more immediately relevant kind of meaning. But signification is even more fundamental, for we can understand what a word signifies without reference to what it connotes, but we cannot understand what it connotes without reference to its signification. (This is true for a given point in time only, for, through time, connotation can cause changes in signification.)

The first step in componential analysis is to make a record of the specific images or concepts that informants say an expression may denote. This requires that we already have a metalanguage, or language of description, for recording the denotata. (For many subject matters no adequate metalanguage as yet exists.) The next step is to find a set of definitive attributes that will predict what informants say may and may not be denoted by the expression. We do this by a combination of two operations: (i) inspecting the set of denotata for common attributes and (ii) contrasting the set of the expression's denotata with sets of denotata of other expressions. The latter is the more crucial operation.

The English kinship term *unt*, as used in much of New England, provides an example. We would list for it such denotata as mother's sister, father's sister, mother's or father's half-sister, mother's brother's (or half-brother's) wife, father's brother's (or half-brother's) wife. By performing the two operations indicated, we might arrive at the following componential definition of what *unt* signifies: Any relative by blood or marriage who is simultaneously (i) female, (ii) removed from ego by

<sup>2</sup>Some of my colleagues interpret “componential analysis” in a narrower sense than I do. The expression comes from linguistics, where it has a technical meaning. I first used it, in connection with the kind of semantic analysis that is described here, in the title of a paper addressed to linguists, because it was the best expression I knew of in their vocabulary for giving them a rough idea of what the paper was about. My anthropological colleagues picked it up and used it as the name for the method, but because of its technical meaning in linguistics, they have tended to use it to refer only to the *isolation* of elements of signification and not to the *ordering* of these elements. The expression is used here to refer to a method of formal semantic analysis that is still in process of development and from which questions of order, structure, and even transformational rules cannot be practically or meaningfully divorced.

two degrees of genealogical distance, (iii) not lineal, (iv) in a senior generation, and (v) not connected by a marital tie in other than the senior generation of the relationship.

In this way the several disjunctive denotata have been brought together in a conjunctive set and form a unitary class described as a product of the combination of several definitive attributes. That the attributes serve as definitive attributes in this case is evident from our observing that varying any one of them results in a judgment that *aunt* is impermissible as a term of reference. Vary attribute i above (the relative's sex), and *uncle* becomes the appropriate term. *Great aunt* becomes appropriate if we vary ii; *grandmother*, if we vary iii; *niece*, if we vary iv; and *wife's aunt* or *husband's aunt*, if we vary v. In this way it is possible to verify the adequacy of a componential definition.

This example illustrates something else. The definitive attribute forming the significatum of *aunt* are values of conceptual variables whose other values form the significata of other terms. To have to use five different variables in a componential definition of *aunt* may not seem to offer any advantage, from the standpoint of our understanding, over use of the short exhaustive list of denotata. But if the same variables will account for a large number of English terms, there is considerable advantage to be gained from componential definitions. These definitions not only describe the significata of different words, they also show how the significata of different words may be related to one another so as to form an ordered array, a taxonomy in the strict sense of the term.

In the case of *aunt*, *uncle*, *nephew*, *niece*, and so on, the respective significata differ as functions of the common set of defining variables. The respective designata, moreover, are mutually exclusive and complementary. We seem to be dealing with some kind of conceptual or ideal space (call it a genealogical one) that has been partitioned into cells by a set of defining variables, each cell being represented by a linguistic label. All the linguistic labels designating the complementary cells of a conceptual space (or domain, as it is frequently called) form a kind of ordered array or terminological system, one in which the significatum of each label is what makes its designatum different from the designata of the other labels.

The cells of such a conceptual space may be grouped in larger divisions than are also labeled, as the designata of *father* and *mother* are grouped under the label *parent*. An ordered array may include many such cover terms. It may omit them entirely, too, just as English lacks a cover term for the combined designata of *aunt* and *uncle*. The designata of *father* and *mother*, being complementary, are at the same level of contrast. They do not complement the designatum of *parent*, however, but nest within it, just as the designata of *collie*, *dog*, *mammal*, and *verte-*



brate nest successively each within the next. They are at different levels of contrast.

Such nesting and complementary relationships among the significata of words are obvious to speakers of English in English examples, but they seem to characterize considerable portions of the vocabulary in every language. Componential analysis helps us to determine, in unfamiliar languages, what words go together in ordered arrays and how their designata are structurally ordered within them. It helps us to avoid arbitrarily sorting words into the conceptual domains of English on the basis of rough translations, or glosses. Thus, componential analysis enabled Fraake, in his account of the Subanun religion, to avoid the mistake of classing together different beings that, by English criteria, would all be "supernatural," and to demonstrate the necessity of a different classification.

### *Analysis of Lapp Kinship Terms*

To illustrate the procedures of componential analysis, I use the following list of Kōnkämä Lapp kinship terms for designating blood kin. (No term denoting a blood relationship can also denote a relationship by marriage, according to Kōnkämä Lapp usage.) The numbers in parentheses in the definitions in the list refer to the numbered relationships of the list.

- 1) *ačče*, father
- 2) *aedne*, mother
- 3) *bardne*, son
- 4) *nieidā*, daughter
- 5) *vielljā*, brother
- 6) *oabba*, sister
- 7) *vilj-baelle*, any male blood relative in ego's generation except brother (5)
- 8) *oam-baelle*, any female blood relative in ego's generation except sister (6)
- 9) *akke*, father's older brother or father's older male blood relative in his generation
- 10) *akket*, child of a man's younger brother or child of any other younger male blood relative of a man in his generation
- 11) *čaecce*, father's younger brother or father's other younger male blood relative in his generation
- 12) *čaeccet*, child of a man's older brother or child of any other older male blood relative of a man in his generation
- 13) *goaske*, mother's older sister or mother's other older female blood relative in her generation
- 14) *goasket*, child of a woman's younger sister or child of any other younger female blood relative of a woman in her generation

15) *muossa*, mother's younger sister or mother's other younger female blood relative in her generation

16) *muossāl*, child of a woman's older sister or child of any other older female blood relative of a woman in her generation

17) *siessa*, father's sister or father's other female blood relative in his generation

18) *siessāl*, child of a woman's brother or child of any other male blood relative of a woman in her generation

19) *aeno*, mother's brother or mother's other male blood relative in her generation

20) *naeppe*, child of a man's sister or child of any other female blood relative of a man in his generation

21) *aggja*, grandfather or any male blood relative in his generation

22) *aggjot*, man's grandchild or any blood relative of a man in his grandchild's generation

23) *akko*, grandmother or any female blood relative in her generation

24) *akkot*, woman's grandchild or any blood relative of a woman in her grandchild's generation

First, we sort the terms into reciprocal (rec.) sets, obtaining the following (with reference to the numbers in the foregoing list):

a) 1, 2 rec. 3, 4

b) 5, 6 rec. 5, 6

c) 7, 8 rec. 7, 8

d) 9 rec. 10

e) 11 rec. 12

f) 13 rec. 14

g) 15 rec. 16

h) 17 rec. 18

i) 19 rec. 20

j) 21 rec. 22

k) 23 rec. 24

This reduces the corpus of 24 kinship terms to 11 reciprocal relationships. Analysis will concentrate on the criteria that discriminate among these relationships, then on the criteria that discriminate among the terms within the relationships.

Reciprocal sets *a* through *c* differ in composition from sets *d* through *k*, the former having pairs of terms on each side of the reciprocal equation, the latter having one term only on each side. Sets *b* and *c* differ from set *a* and sets *d* through *k*, moreover, in that the former are self-reciprocating whereas the others are not. Inspection reveals that, in relationships *b* and *c*, "ego" and "alter" are always in the same generation but that in the other relationships they are always in different generations. For the moment, then, we have, as a discriminant variable,

A) Similarity of generation of ego and alter, with the values

A.1) Ego and alter in the same generation (sets *b*, *c*)

A.2) Ego and alter in different generations (set *a* and sets *d-k*)

Sets *b* and *c* differ in that, in *b*, ego and alter are in the closest possible genealogical relationship, whereas, in *c*, they are in other than the closest

possible relationship. This distinction also serves to discriminate set *a* from sets *d* through *k*; it groups sets *a* and *b* together, in contrast to sets *c* through *k*. Thus we have a second discriminant variable,

- B) Closeness of relationship between ego and alter, with the values  
 B.1) Ego and alter in closest possible relationship (*a, b*)  
 B.2) Ego and alter not in closest possible relationship (*c-k*)

It is not evident from the data presented here that, in the larger corpus of Kõmkämä Lapp kinship terms, the two sets *a* and *b* (terms 1 through 6) are a unit of reference for deriving other terms and discriminating among still others, much as the English terms *father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister* are collectively a unit of reference for deriving terms with the prefix *step-* and the suffix *-in-law* (which are not regularly used with any other English kinship terms). Sets *a* and *b*, therefore, stand together as a larger unit whose integrity must be maintained in whatever paradigm we construct for this taxonomic array, just as the integrity of reciprocal sets as natural units within the data must also be maintained.

There remains the necessity of differentiating the several reciprocal sets *d* through *k*. Are there any intrinsic groupings we can discern here? Sets *d* through *i* denote relationships in which ego and alter are always one generation apart, while sets *j* and *k* denote relationships in which ego and alter are always two generations distant. This gives us the discriminant variable,

- C) Number of generations between ego and alter, with the values  
 C.1) Ego and alter one generation distant (*d-i*)  
 C.2) Ego and alter two generations distant (*j, k*)

In set *a*, ego and alter are also one generation apart, and in sets *b* and *c*, ego and alter are in the same generation. Could we not add zero distance to the values listed above for variable C and eliminate variable A as redundant? For the portion of Lapp terminology analyzed here we can, indeed, do so; but among the affinal terms, some denote relationships in which alter is never in ego's generation but may be either one or two generations distant. This makes variables A and C both necessary in the larger array of terms, A having a universal application and C a more limited one.

Sets *d* through *i* fall into two natural groups. In one the age of the senior party relative to the age of the linking parent of the junior party is a discriminating factor (sets *d* through *g*), but in the other (*h, i*) it is not. What makes these two groups different seems to be the similarity of sex of the senior party and the sex of the linking parent of the junior party in the relationship. These considerations give us the two discriminant variables,

D) Similarity of sex of senior party and sex of linking parent of junior party, with the values

D.1) Sex of senior party and of parent of junior party the same ( $d-g$ )

D.2) Sex of senior party and of parent of junior party different ( $h, i$ )

E) Relative age of senior party and of linking parent of junior party, with the values

E.1) Senior party older than linking parent ( $d, f$ )

E.2) Senior party younger than linking parent ( $e, g$ )

This leaves us with the problem of differentiating within each of the pairs of sets  $d$  and  $f$ ,  $e$  and  $g$ ,  $h$  and  $i$ , and  $j$  and  $k$ . Clearly, in each pair the difference is in the sex of the senior party in the relationship (regardless of whether the senior party is ego or alter); this gives us the discriminant variable,

F) Sex of senior party in the relationship, with the values

F.1) Sex of senior party male ( $d, e, i, j$ )

F.2) Sex of senior party female ( $f, g, h, k$ )

All the sets of reciprocal terms are now fully differentiated. We can put the array of sets, with their defining characteristics, in a matrix table, with the columns representing the discriminant variables and the rows representing the sets of reciprocal terms, as shown in Table 1.

This brings us to a crucial part of the procedure: the ordering of columns and rows. If the set of sets of reciprocal terms we have been analyzing were completely unordered, there would be no problem. In this example, as in all kinship terminologies with which I am familiar, we are dealing with a partially ordered set. Only variables A and B partition the entire universe; variables C and F partition the part of it that is both A.2 and B.2; variable D partitions only the part that is C.1; and variable E partitions only the part that is D.1. But variables C, D, and E have no such systematic relationship to variable F. They are unordered with respect to F, just as A and B are unordered with respect to each other.

In Table 1, the major variables A and B are put at the extreme left, but their position relative to each other is arbitrary. Consistency now requires that variable C be to the left of D, which must be to the left of E. Variable F must be to the right of A and B, but since it is unordered with respect to C, D, and E, its position at the far right is arbitrary.

The ordering of rows, given a particular order of columns, must be such as to minimize the occurrence of the same values of the same variables in other than adjacent rows. Thus ordered, the matrix in Table 1 is identical in structure to the tree diagram in Figure 1 and fully portrays the major and minor groupings of the sets of reciprocal terms created by the hierarchical ordering of the discriminant variables. Our principle for ordering rows preserves the integrity of these major and

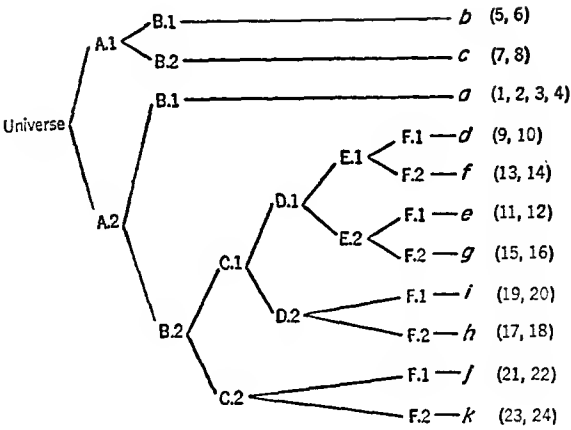


Figure 1 Tree diagram of hierarchical ordering of semantic components of reciprocal sets of terms *a* through *k* (see text) as represented in Table 1.

minor groupings by keeping the sets of reciprocal terms within them in adjacent rows.

Table 1 MATRIX TABLE FOR RECIPROCAL SETS *a* THROUGH *k* (see text)

Sets of reciprocal terms	Discriminant variables					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
<i>b</i> (5, 6)	A.1	B.1	•	•	•	•
<i>c</i> (7, 8)	A.1	B.2	•	•	•	•
<i>a</i> (1, 2, 3, 4)	A.2	B.1	•	•	•	•
<i>d</i> (9, 10)	A.2	B.2	C.1	D.1	E.1	F.1
<i>f</i> (13, 14)	A.2	B.2	C.1	D.1	E.1	F.2
<i>e</i> (11, 12)	A.2	B.2	C.1	D.1	E.2	F.1
<i>g</i> (15, 16)	A.2	B.2	C.1	D.1	E.2	F.2
<i>i</i> (19, 20)	A.2	B.2	C.1	D.2	•	F.1
<i>h</i> (17, 18)	A.2	B.2	C.1	D.2	•	F.2
<i>j</i> (21, 22)	A.2	B.2	C.2	•	•	F.1
<i>k</i> (23, 24)	A.2	B.2	C.2	•	•	F.2

Consideration of the integrity of subgroups of terms may also be relevant to the ordering of variables that otherwise appear to be unordered. For example, the arrangement of columns in Table 1 serves to separate the sets of terms *b* and *a* so that they are not in adjacent rows. Yet the six terms in these two sets themselves form a larger set, as we have noted. To preserve the integrity of this larger set, we must juxta-

pose columns A and B, as shown in Table 2. According to our rule for ordering rows, the sets of terms *b* and *a* now fall in adjacent rows.

Because variable F is unordered with respect to variables C, D, and E, we are free to position it elsewhere, provided it remains to the right of columns A and B. By moving column F over to the left of columns D and E, we group together the variables in order of their extent of relevance in discriminating among the sets of reciprocal terms in the array, as also shown in Table 2.

Table 2 REORDERED MATRIX TABLE FOR RECIPROCAL SET *a* THROUGH *k*

Sets of reciprocal terms	Discriminant variables					
	B	A	C	F	D	E
<i>b</i> (5, 6)	B.1	A.1	•	•	•	•
<i>a</i> (1, 2, 3, 4)	B.1	A.2	•	•	•	•
<i>c</i> (7, 8)	B.2	A.1	•	•	•	•
<i>d</i> (9, 10)	B.2	A.2	C.1	F.1	D.1	E.1
<i>e</i> (11, 12)	B.2	A.2	C.1	F.1	D.1	E.2
<i>i</i> (19, 20)	B.2	A.2	C.1	F.1	D.2	•
<i>f</i> (13, 14)	B.2	A.2	C.1	F.2	D.1	E.1
<i>g</i> (15, 16)	B.2	A.2	C.1	F.2	D.1	E.2
<i>h</i> (17, 18)	B.2	A.2	C.1	F.2	D.2	•
<i>j</i> (21, 22)	B.2	A.2	C.2	F.1		•
<i>k</i> (23, 24)	B.2	A.2	C.2	F.2	•	•

It remains now to discriminate among the designata of the terms in each reciprocal set. Two variables account for them all:

G) Seniority of alter's generation, with the values

G.1) Alter in senior generation (1, 2, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23)

G.2) Alter in junior generation (3, 4, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24)

H) Sex of alter, with the values

H.1) Alter's sex male (1, 3, 5, 7)

H.2) Alter's sex female (2, 4, 6, 8)

By adding these variables to the matrix shown in Table 2, we have the complete taxonomic array portrayed in Table 3. Variables G and H appear at the extreme right in Table 3, because if they were in any other position it would be impossible to keep the terms within each reciprocal set in adjacent rows.

By preserving the integrity of these reciprocal sets, we get an ordering of columns that is consistent with different levels of organization, so to speak, within the array. Variables A through F are at one level of organization, discriminating among sets of reciprocal terms, although they vary in the extent of their relevance, and variables G and H, discriminating within these sets, are at another level of organization. Because variables F and H both involve a consideration of sex, and

Table 3 COMPONENTIAL PARADIGM REPRESENTING A COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF LAPP CONSANGUINEAL TERMS

Set	No.	Term	Discriminant variables							
			B	A	C	F	D	E	G	H
<i>b</i>	5	<i>vielljā</i>	B.1	A.1	.	.	.	.	.	H.1
	6	<i>oabba</i>	B.1	A.1	.	.	.	.	.	H.2
<i>a</i>	1	<i>ačče</i>	B.1	A.2	.	.	.	.	G.1	H.1
	2	<i>aedne</i>	B.1	A.2	.	.	.	.	G.1	H.2
	3	<i>bardne</i>	B.1	A.2	.	.	.	.	G.2	H.1
	4	<i>nieidā</i>	B.1	A.2	.	.	.	.	G.2	H.2
<i>c</i>	7	<i>vilj-baelle</i>	B.2	A.1	.	.	.	.	.	H.1
	8	<i>oam-baelle</i>	B.2	A.1	.	.	.	.	.	H.2
<i>d</i>	9	<i>akke</i>	B.2	A.2	C.1	F.1	D.1	E.1	G.1	.
	10	<i>akket</i>	B.2	A.2	C.1	F.1	D.1	E.1	G.2	.
<i>e</i>	11	<i>čaecce</i>	B.2	A.2	C.1	F.1	D.1	E.2	G.1	.
	12	<i>čaeccet</i>	B.2	A.2	C.1	F.1	D.1	E.2	G.2	.
<i>i</i>	19	<i>aeno</i>	B.2	A.2	C.1	F.1	D.2	.	G.1	.
	20	<i>naeppe</i>	B.2	A.2	C.1	F.1	D.2	.	G.2	.
<i>f</i>	13	<i>goaske</i>	B.2	A.2	C.1	F.2	D.1	E.1	G.1	.
	14	<i>goasket</i>	B.2	A.2	C.1	F.2	D.1	E.1	G.2	.
<i>g</i>	15	<i>muossa</i>	B.2	A.2	C.1	F.2	D.1	E.2	G.1	.
	16	<i>muossäl</i>	B.2	A.2	C.1	F.2	D.1	E.2	G.2	.
<i>h</i>	17	<i>siessa</i>	B.2	A.2	C.1	F.2	D.2	.	G.1	.
	18	<i>siessäl</i>	B.2	A.2	C.1	F.2	D.2	.	G.2	.
<i>j</i>	21	<i>aggja</i>	B.2	A.2	C.2	F.1	.	.	G.1	.
	22	<i>aggjot</i>	B.2	A.2	C.2	F.1	.	.	G.2	.
<i>k</i>	23	<i>akko</i>	B.2	A.2	C.2	F.2	.	.	G.1	.
	24	<i>akkot</i>	B.2	A.2	C.2	F.2	.	.	G.2	.

because they are in complementary distribution in the matrix table, it is tempting to think of them as going together in the overall structure of the array; but there is nothing to be gained by so viewing them, because they pertain to different levels of organization.

The order of columns G and H relative to each other in Table 3 is determined by another consideration. If we move H to the left of G, the effect is to prevent terms 1 and 2 from being in adjacent rows. Yet terms 1 and 2 are a subset belonging to the same side of a reciprocal equation, terms 3 and 4 going together on the other side. (Terms 1 and 3 complement 2 and 4 but do not reciprocate them.) Having column G to the left of Column H preserves the integrity of these subsets in the array.

Attention to the ordering of columns and rows, as illustrated in this analysis, brings out the structural design of a semantic domain (here, kinship). This design is implicit in the way the several terms pertaining to the domain are said by informants to be correctly and incorrectly used. (Note that we do not ask informants to define the terms but ask them only to judge the correctness of the way in which the terms are used.) In this case the structural design includes different levels of organization and, within each level, a hierarchical ordering of at least some of its component variables. From left to right in Table 3, as we have observed, variables B, A, C, F, D, and E are at one level of organization, and variables G and H are at another. At the latter level, as we have seen, G has structural priority over H; and in the other set of variables, B and A together have priority over C and F, and C has priority over D, which has priority over E. The capacity of componential analysis for bringing out implicit and covert structural designs of semantic domains makes it useful for purposes of comparison as well as description.

### *Alternative Representations and Their Implications*

To the extent that the data analyzed permit us to formulate alternative variables that discriminate equally well among the several terms' respective sets of denotata, we are able to construct more than one satisfactory model of the structuring of a semantic domain. This raises a serious question about the usefulness of componential analysis as a means of constructing scientifically useful representations of ways in which other people see things.

If we assume that all Lapp people who use their kinship terms in the same way have the same subconscious feel for what these terms mean and somehow share a view that is the one "true" view for anthropological science to discover and describe, then, obviously, we cannot say that componential analysis can guarantee that its products will have this kind of validity. But if we assume that componential analysis is a formal model of the procedures by which people learn what others seem to mean by the words they use, and if we discover from it that more than one product of these procedures may lead to identical overt usages, we must conclude that other people who speak the same language and agree on how its words should be used do not necessarily share a common view but merely have the illusion that they do. If this is the case, then the above question about the usefulness of componential analysis rests on a false assumption about cognitive sharing, an assumption that grants to other humans a capacity for cognitive sharing that equally human investigators lack.

If people who use their terms in the same way may still have somewhat different subjective views as to what the terms signify, and if the



same person may have more than one view, any componential representation of what the terms mean, provided it leads us to use them denotatively in the same way others do, is ethnographically adequate. From such a representation we can generate the data that will permit us to construct alternative representations. We select one componential representation over another because of the ease with which we can comprehend it, and because of the ease with which we can use it to understand what others are saying and to make ourselves understood.

We can say, then, that the componential paradigm presented in Table 3 represents a comprehensive view of Lapp kinship terms, a view such as an adult Lapp *might* subjectively have arrived at after much experience of using such terms. Certainly a small child does not know any principles for differentiating kinds of kinsmen. Given information about how two people are connected, he cannot correctly state, as an adult can, the category of their relationship. He is taught quite arbitrarily what labels to give to specific individuals. With growing experience he gets successive insights into the ways in which the terminology works, and he develops progressively more elegant conceptions of it. How much progress of this kind any one person makes depends on his experience and his intellectual acuity. Componential analysis leads to the construction of conceptual models of the most adult type—it is hoped, to models that are as elegant as any that can be constructed for a given terminology.

From this point of view, it would be wrong to assume that the model of Lapp-kinship semantics presented here represents the way individual Lapps actually think about the signification of their kinship terms (just as it would be wrong to assume that the formal statement of a language's grammar represents the way individual speakers think about that grammar). What the model represents is a pattern of usage, something each Lapp spends a considerable portion of his life learning to understand. Adequate representations of this usage are bound to help us share understanding with Lapps in the same way that Lapps share understanding with one another—and with the same limitations. Such a degree of mutual understanding is far greater than that obtainable from most ethnographic descriptions that have been made to date.

### *Alternative Approaches*

Not only are there alternative models that can be constructed by the procedures of componential analysis, there are also alternative strategies and consequent procedures for dealing with the problem of describing what words signify. Floyd Lounsbury has begun to develop a strategy for describing the significata of kinship terms in which he assumes that there is, for each term, a primary denotatum and that the remaining acceptable denotata can be generated through operations on

the primary ones. These operations, called extension rules (and including such things as equivalence rules and skewing rules), may be fully or partially ordered, and the minimum set of rules, together with their ordering, that will account for the kinship terminology as it is used portrays the structure of the semantic domain.

Lounsbury's approach can be usefully combined with componential analysis. I have found the use of an equivalence rule of Lounsbury's type essential to defining the way in which the concept of difference in genealogical generation is to be understood as a discriminant variable in the kinship terminology of Truk, and Lounsbury uses componential analysis to describe how the primary denotata for a set of kinship terms are to be distinguished from one another. The two approaches appear to be complementary, therefore, rather than contradictory.

### *Some Preliminary Findings*

Because it is aimed at comprehending total patterns of usage, componential analysis requires, for any particular pattern, a sample of data that exceeds what is often collected. Anthropologists have been reporting kinship terminology for decades, but a survey shows that few reports are sufficiently full to permit us to subject the data presented in them to a componential analysis. Concern with this kind of analysis should help improve the quality of ethnographic study and reporting.

As we acquire a corpus of kinship terminologies that have been subjected to componential analysis, it becomes increasingly fruitful to review the range of discriminant variables they employ.

Already analysis has produced a wider range of variables than that encompassed by the criteria of kinship noted by Alfred Kroeber in 1909, criteria that have been standard for anthropologists ever since. By definition, any kinship terminology must employ some variables that reflect the properties of genealogical space. But all the terminologies I have examined employ other variables as well. In many terminologies, these additional variables reflect such human universals as sex and birth order, but in some they also reflect features of social organization, such as clan and other kin-group memberships—things that are not universal human attributes and that in each case derive from facets of the local culture. With such terminologies, componential analyses are impossible without the relevant cultural information.

The several analyses I have made have revealed one striking difference among kinship terminologies. Most terminologies can be analyzed in the two stages illustrated here, the first dealing with reciprocal sets of terms and the second dealing with the several terms within these sets. One terminology that I have analyzed, that of the Kalmuck Mongols cannot be readily handled in this way. It does not structure the field of

kinship as a set of reciprocal relationships, such as would be appropriate to the structuring of an objective or outsider's view of it, but presents a field of relatives as subjectively viewed by an ego at the center, ego's way of labeling his various relatives having little or no correspondence with the way they label him. Componential analysis shows this basic structural difference clearly—one that, as far as I know, has never figured in any of the vast anthropological literature on kinship.

Componential analysis obviously gives promise of entirely new classifications of kinship terminologies, based on the conceptual variables the terminologies employ and the role these variables play in the structural designs of kinship paradigms. Already it is evident that groupings of kinship terminologies according to these criteria are quite independent of the groupings obtained by the criteria anthropologists have used up to this time. This does not mean that existing typologies of kinship terminology, such as those used by G. P. Murdock for comparative study, are without value. Different typologies reflect different considerations, and any one of them becomes the appropriate one when the considerations it reflects are the object of inquiry. But established classifications of kinship terminologies have been of little use for phylogenetic study. For example, the several kinship terminologies in a set of phylogenetically related languages (as in the Indo-European or Malayo-Polynesian language families) usually include a variety of Murdock's major types. By contrasts, such groupings as I have made, based on similarities of gross structural design of kinship paradigms resulting from componential analysis, correspond more closely with linguistic phylogenetic groupings. Nothing is certain yet, but the preliminary indications are encouraging.

## 21 Kinship Terminology and Evolution<sup>1</sup>



Elman R. Service

IN THEIR DESIRE TO ORDER THE UNIVERSE, EARLIER EVOLUTIONISTS HAVE sometimes claimed regularities of sequence that further analysis has proven unjustified. Nowhere has revisionism been more successful than in evolutionary theory applied to the development of kinship systems. Lewis Henry Morgan, great anthropological innovator of the nineteenth century, practically invented the scientific study of kinship systems as a main prop of his theory of cultural evolution stages. Even apart from Morgan it was commonplace to see the evolution of domestic organization from a condition of bestial promiscuity, through polygyny to monogamy and from matriliney to patriliney. The destruction of this view was the proud accomplishment of two generations of American anthropologists including the most eminent, scholars like Franz Boas, Robert Lowie, and George P. Murdock.

*When specific concern for the older theories died away, there*

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remained a genuine anthropological problem of first magnitude: Since other aspects of cultural evolution are consistently manifest, why should there be such a discrepancy with regard to the evolution of systems of kin relationship? This is the problem to which Elman Service turns. As he says, his solution is simple, but in order to reach it he asks us to join him in rethinking what we mean by such pat phrases as "cultural evolution" and "kinship."

Kinship terms are aspects of social life and in some important measure their patterns must be determined by characteristics of the society itself. So far as I know, no modern anthropologists have disagreed with this notion except for certain reservations expressed by A. L. Kroeber, E. W. Gifford, and M. E. Opler. If it has any virtue as a generalization, however, we should expect that the tremendous changes in types of society from the simple hunting-gathering bands to the complex modern states which have accompanied the evolution of culture would be reflected in significant and far-reaching alterations in basic patterns of kinship terminology that could be understood in relation to that evolution.

But apparently such a logical expectation remains unfulfilled. G. P. Murdock states in his influential *Social Structure*:

. . . there is no inevitable sequence of social forms nor any necessary association between particular rules of residence or descent or particular types of kin groups or kinship terms and levels of culture, types of economy, or forms of government or class structure.

And again:

The forms of social organization, indeed, appear to show a striking lack of correlation with levels or types of technology, economy, property rights, class structure, or political integration . . . an objective classification of societies in terms of their similarities in social structure results in grouping together under the same specific type and sub-type such dissimilar peoples as the New England Yankees and the forest-dwelling Negritoes of the Andaman Islands . . . [Numerous further examples]. Nowhere does even a revised evolutionism find a shred of support.

L. A. White, in his recent *Evolution of Culture* remarks:

Morgan's theory of the evolution of the various forms of the family and their concomitant systems of kinship has been obsolete for decades. And no one since his day has been able to work out and establish a valid theory of the evolution of kinship systems.

In the following pages I hope to show the relationship of kinds of terminological patterns to levels or stages of cultural evolution. The solution proposed is a simple one, but first the way must be prepared by arguing certain premises about the nature of evolution and of kinship

terminologies. I shall also propose some new kinds of classifications of terminological patterns, inasmuch as it is possible that the relation of these patterns to evolutionary levels of social organization has been obscured by the classifications that are now well established. That is to say, typologies such as "Crow," "Omaha," "Dakota-Iroquois," or "bifurcate-merging," "bifurcate-collateral," and "lineal" may be useful for certain kinds of studies but not appropriate for the present question. The new classifications have as a first purpose the solution of the evolutionary problem which, of course, is a most general one, but they have some further uses in several more specific kinds of problems which I shall suggest briefly at the end of this paper.

### *Two Perspectives on Evolution*

There are many definitions of evolution and a good number of them would be acceptable for the present purpose. Julian Huxley's is simple and general and will do for cultural as well as biological phenomena: "Evolution may be regarded as the process by which the utilization of the earth's resources by living matter is rendered progressively more efficient." It should be noted that this definition refers to life as a whole; it is concerned with what might be called total evolution and can be seen as including man's cultural means of capturing energy as well as the biological means of all lower life forms.

The total system evolves as a totality. This is a justifiable way of looking at evolution because every specific life form is in a very real sense interrelated, directly and indirectly, with all the others. Nevertheless, life and culture are more often viewed as a great series of distinct and particular material organizations of energy, which, of course, is a useful perspective for many questions. Life as a whole moves in the general direction of improved energy-capture by diverging into specific forms that are each adapted to a particular *kind* of energy-capture in a particular environment. Thus life as a total system has a single evolutionary direction, while specific forms take diverse routes in adaptation.

Evolution, therefore, can be seen from two wholly different perspectives. On the one hand, our interest may be centered on particular phylogenetic lines and their progress in increasing their adaptive specialization, their adjustment to the environment. This is the "descent with modification," the "origin of species," in Darwin's terms. In this perspective, advance is always relative, relative to the particular environment and to the special problems it creates. There is no absolute criterion for a general comparison of adaptive advances; the development of greater size, fur, fins, or whatever may mean advance in one environment but not in another. This perspective we may call *specific evolution* in order to separate it clearly from the other, that of *general evolution*.

General evolution is the perspective on total evolution which is concerned with progress as such, the emergence of *higher forms*, rather than improved adaptation to a particular environment. The criterion of progress, therefore, is not stated in relative terms. It is a measurement stage by stage in such absolute terms as amount of energy captured and built-in or by the complexity of the resulting organization.

A further difference in the two perspectives is important for a discussion of evolution in relation to kinship terminology. Specific evolution is concerned with the progression of *related* forms as one succeeds another in the process of adaptive specialization. The classification of forms employed is normally phylogenetic taxonomy, therefore, and whole populations are the units of investigation. When the concern is with general progress, however, the units become forms as forms and the typology is not phylogenetic. The phylogenetic relationship of the forms is not relevant just as particular environments are not relevant. The typology in this context is concerned with the salient characteristics which will define the stages to which forms will be assigned regardless of their relationship. Man is not descended from the rainbow trout; they are species contemporary to each other and differently adapted to different environments. But man occupies a stage in general evolution higher than that of the trout.

The discrimination of specific from general evolution must be made in order to avoid confusion in the discussion to follow. Ordinarily "evolution" in 19th century anthropology and in the modern work of Childe and White has meant general evolution. On the other hand, in recent years Julian Steward has pioneered in cultural ecological (adaptive) studies—which could be considered studies in specific evolution—and in "multilinear evolution," the study of parallel adaptations in different specific evolutionary lines. A number of people have accepted his ideas and specific evolution has finally found a home in modern anthropological theory. But this change in the usage of the word evolution can get us into trouble here. If this paper is devoted to the relation of kinship terminologies to "evolution," in which sense are we to use the word?

The problem as stated is concerned with general evolution; the above-quoted remarks of Murdock and White refer to over-all stages in cultural evolution. If specific evolution were the issue, then we find many studies which relate changes in terminological patterns to changes in specific adaptation. In fact, it is necessary only to mention the names of Lowie, Radcliffe-Brown, Eggan, Spoehr, as well as White and Murdock, to call to the reader's mind some of the salient contributions of that order. And Murdock himself titled an essay "Evolution in Social Organization" in which he gave a detailed analysis of a particular "very concrete process of orderly adaptive change" which, in part at least, involved changes in kinship terminology. But now Murdock very ex-

plicitly limits the meaning of evolution to what is here called specific evolution in this later reconsideration of the problem.

The problem, then, will be addressed in terms of the relationship of kinds or types of nomenclatures to levels or stages of the progressively greater social complexity manifest in general cultural evolution. Because the general perspective requires a classification which is not phylogenetic (or "historic") but one which discriminates types of categories of forms appropriate for the question, it is necessary now to discuss the nature of kinship terms in order to propose a different way of classifying them.

### *What Are Kinship Terms?*

It is unnecessary to review the early debates as to whether, or to what extent, kinship terms are related to social life. Today nearly everyone agrees that kinship terms are somehow "social." Yet there seems to be some ambiguity and vagueness in such a statement. In what ways, precisely, are kin terms social?

In the literature of anthropology there are two distinguishable points of view as to the relation of kin terms to society or social life. On the one hand there is the judgment of Lewis H. Morgan that kinship terminologies are "systems of consanguinity and affinity," that they have to do with a people's recognition of their genealogical relationships and therefore describe to us the actual organization of the kinship order (or sometimes an anterior form of it). On the other hand there is the idea, argued by Radcliffe-Brown, that kinship terms are like "signposts" to interpersonal conduct or etiquette, with implications of appropriate reciprocal rights, duties, privileges, and obligations. There is a superficial resemblance between these two views, perhaps, but also a basic difference which can lead us in two quite different directions. They are both "sociological" theories of kinship terminology, true, but they refer to quite different aspects of social life, to the genealogical organization as such and to patterns in the conduct of interpersonal relations.

That these two views are not identical was manifested during the earliest years of kinship studies in the Morgan-McLennan controversy. Morgan argued that kinship terminologies reflected the forms of marriage and the related makeup of the family; McLennan replied that they were merely forms of mutual salutations and were not related to actual blood ties at all. McLennan seems to be largely forgotten today, but I submit here that he had a point; I think he was about half-right or at least as right as Morgan.

Morgan won the argument in the sense that his view has survived in his name and McLennan's has not. There are evidences that many people today think of kinship terminology as giving somehow a genea-



logical picture of the society. Winick's *Dictionary of Anthropology* expresses succinctly this widespread view: "*Kinship*: The social recognition and expression of genealogical relationships, both consanguineal and affinal." When anthropologists use the words "kinship," "kinship system," and "social organization" to mean sometimes the pattern of terminology and sometimes the actual genealogical organization of the society or both simultaneously—and many do this—it would seem that Morgan's view is still implied, however unwittingly.

Clearly there is something wrong, or somewhat wrong, with the assumption that kinship terms function as labels for the actual parts of the society. Were it wholly correct then there would have been no argument possible in the first place and the problem we are considering here would not exist. Despite many attempts, however, no one has succeeded in showing that there is, in fact, a simple direct correlation between an actual genealogical form of a society and a particular kind of kinship terminology.

The view of Radcliffe-Brown and his students permits a rather different perspective on the question. To paraphrase him, kinship terms are used in address and reference as denotative of social positions relevant to interpersonal conduct. They are, therefore, a form of status terminology. Munroe Edmonson, who has written on the question of the relationship of terminologies to social organizations, defines a status term as "a word designating a class of individuals occupying (simultaneously or serially) a single position in the social system, with specific defining patterns of rights and duties, the fulfillment of which is legitimized and guaranteed by sanctions." Henceforth, I shall use "status term" with this meaning. Kinship terminology, it is apparent, is a category within status terminology—a subspecies of it, so to speak. Kinship terms are status terms which are familistic; other status terms, such as "Lord," "Doctor," or "Angakok," are nonfamilistic.

If kinship terms are a kind of status terminology and relevant to interpersonal behavior then they are, of course, related to the actual organization of the society. But it is important to remember that for the very reason that their use is in the context of interpersonal relations they are related to the total society only partially, in certain ways only; they do not adequately "reflect" the society. Many aspects of social organization are not relevant to status considerations and others that might be are not recognized as such by the people. Status terms in modern U.S.A. may refer to certain important occupations, for example, but not precisely to wealth differences as such, nor to social class as such. This does not mean that wealth and class differences are not important aspects of American society. Polynesian generational terms and titles in status usage have overridden such genealogical considerations as the distinction between cousins and siblings, but again, this does not mean that the

genealogical distinction does not exist in Polynesian society. And in some Australian societies moieties, sections, and subsections really exist but are not named as status positions whereas in others they are. Or take the case of teknonymous terms: the status "father" is more important than that of "husband" in some situations and will predominate in interpersonal usage, but we know that the social position of husband does in fact still exist in those situations.

It seems probable that such different views as Morgan's and Radcliffe-Brown's can exist side by side without everyone seeing one as obviously correct and the other incorrect because kinship terms themselves are actually ambiguous *as words*. That is to say, a given word such as "father" can in fact function in one usage as a label identifying a person's genealogical position, "progenitor" let us say, with no reference whatever to status in interpersonal conduct—the father even could have been dead for twenty years. On the other hand the same word might label a status relevant to conduct with includes persons who are not progenitors and can even be extended metaphorically in such usages as "Father Sun" with no relevance to the actual genealogical structure of the society. The meaning of the word "father" depends on the context of its use, just as does that of many other words.

An informant can sit down and give labels, make a word picture, of the genealogical structure of his society as he understands it. But the words and word-combinations he uses may be different from the status terms of address and reference, and even when they are the same words they have a different meaning. D. D. Lee showed this clearly in an interesting study of the use of kin terms among the Wintun. This means that an ethnologist must use some methodological caution in making a list of kin terms so as to know which are status terms and which are not. While reading Morgan's journals I noticed that his method could not lead to the uncovering of status terms except accidentally; he was trying to reconstruct the actual genealogical tables of the Indian tribes. It may be that his dedication to this single purpose is the cause of some of the discrepancies between his findings and those of later investigators.

It would appear that it is the use of kinship terms as *status terms* that had caused the difficulty in relating terminologies to actual social organizations. Status terms are only incomplete pictures of an objectively describable social structure. Nevertheless, it seems obvious that if status terms refer to social positions significant for interpersonal conduct, then they will probably become greater in number and variety as society grows in complexity, i.e., includes more status positions.

It is probably also obvious that we have overcome part of the problem of relating kinship terminology to evolution simply by subsuming kinship terminology under the broader category of status terminology. Joseph Greenberg established a precedent for this procedure when he

discussed the relation of language to evolution by treating language as an aspect of the larger category "communication." He then deftly made clear the functional relationship of language to communication and related the changes in communication to cultural evolution. Kinship terminology, like language, does not autonomously undergo evolution; it is a subsidiary aspect of a greater functional entity.

But there is more to be discussed. We also want to know what new kinds of social groups evolve, and what is the relationship of familistic status terms to other kinds of status terms in the totality of change.

### *Four Kinds of Status Terms*

As already suggested, status terms can be divided into two basic subdivisions, *familistic* and *nonfamilistic*. Familistic terms include any named social positions which are found in a group of kindred or which have as their prototypes or derivations such positions—that is, any familial or "family-like" terms. Families are internally differentiated by certain genealogical or quasi-genealogical and affinal social relationships and by sex and age distinctions. Some of these criteria of social differentiation may be extended beyond the actual kin group. Intermarrying moieties (as generalized affinal groups), age-grades, and the Australian classes are groups defined in family-like terms with family-like relations among them. All of these I shall call familistic and when they are named as status positions relating to interpersonal conduct the names are familistic status terms.

Examples of status positions that are nonfamilistic are such things as occupational specializations, political offices, social classes, and the like. When the names or titles related to such positions are used and affect interpersonal conduct then they are nonfamilistic status terms.

There is another useful way of discriminating status terms into two kinds. A term which specifies a social position relative to another particular person—an "ego"—could be called *egocentric*. One which specifies a social position relative to the structure of the society itself could be called *sociocentric*. A few examples should make this distinction clear.

"(My) son," "(his) uncle," "(your) wife," "(Absalom's) father," "The (Dean's) Secretary," are egocentric status terms in their normal use. They may be either terms of address or reference or both (sometimes the same term is used either way), but the status exists always with respect to a relationship *to* somebody. The egos are placed in parentheses in the above examples because they do not always need to be specified. But when they are not actually specified, the context must always reveal who they are, for the egocentrically defined social position depends on two things: the kind of relationship to ego and who the ego is—the

grandfather relationship is one thing, but *my* grandfather might not be your grandfather. In short, the "kinship terminology" that anthropology professors diagram on blackboards is usually an egocentric system.

Sociocentric terms refer to social positions in the society itself, not to a relationship with another person. Names of moieties and clans, occupational specialties and guilds, socioeconomic classes, titles of office, names of family lines, place of birth, and so on, all may in certain social contexts, in some society or another, function as status terms. All refer to a person's position in the society at large and thus are sociocentric. A person is *in* this status no matter who is addressing or referring to him.

A distinction similar to the present egocentric-sociocentric dichotomy has already been made in three works, apparently independently. They call ordinary egocentric kinship terms "relative," while terms referring to groups like classes and clans are "absolute." The "relative-absolute" dichotomy is suggestive but there is a difficulty. Egocentric terms are relative, true, but always relative to a particular ego. Yet sociocentric terms are also sometimes relative; the point is that they are relative to objective groups in the society. Thus, a member of a generation grade may have a sociocentric label, let us say *apo*, but whether this term is used instead of another depends on the generation grade of the person addressing him. He may be *apo* to the younger generation, something else to his contemporaries, and still another term might be used by his elders. But note: he is still in a sociocentric social position, the generation grade, which can be described and labeled objectively, and so is the person addressing him. The relativity in this situation is that of differing sociocentric groups rather than particular egos.

At this point it may be well to emphasize again the significance of context. One cannot tell whether a given word is egocentric or sociocentric, or even whether it is in fact a status term, just by looking at it. For example, is the word "father" egocentric or sociocentric? Answer: it all depends . . . You say to your own father: "Yes, Father, I shall heed your advice." Father is here an egocentric status term. You reply to a Catholic priest: "Yes, Father, I shall heed your advice." In this case the term is sociocentric, a title used for a category of persons in the society—the priest is not the father *of* anybody. Many other terms have been borrowed, so to speak, or derived from egocentric usage to label whole groups sociocentrically. "Grandfather" or sometimes "uncle" are terms used in many societies to label not only those relatives of particular persons but also for any person of the class "old men" or "respected men." Take the statement: "Why don't you help that old lady? She may be somebody's mother." She may be *a* mother, a person of an age, sex, and familial position that merits a kind of general respect no matter whose mother she is. Similarly, to be *a* wife—a member of the

general class "married women"—is sociocentric and a very different usage from specifying the *President's* wife, *your* wife, or the *prisoner's* wife. Members of unions such as the Brotherhood of Railway Engineers address each other as "brother," a sociocentric term in this case, but they are not confused by the fact that the word also has an egocentric usage with a quite different meaning. All of this should be no more confusing than any discussion of the meaning of words; some are more ambiguous than others, but in all cases the present meaning is related to the present context.

It is apparent that the two kinds of subdivisions, familistic-non-familistic and egocentric-sociocentric, cut across each other. Any status term, therefore, can be assigned to one of four categories. They are illustrated below with examples which have status value in social contexts that can be readily supplied by the imagination.

<i>Egocentric-Familistic</i>	<i>Sociocentric-Familistic</i>
Terms of address: "Son," "Mom," "Auntie," "Dad."	Terms of address: "Brother, can you spare a dime" ("Brother" is used here to suggest equality and mutual dependence); "Sonny," "Gramps" (when age or generational status is the criterion); "Sister" (among nuns); "Axe" (child of my father's clan).
Terms of reference: "John's son," "Your old man," "My kid," "She's my sister-in-law."	Terms of reference: "He's a father" (of children); "All those men are Blackmouths" (Clan brothers); "She's a Hatfield, inlaw to the Coys."
<i>Egocentric-Nonfamilistic</i>	<i>Sociocentric-Nonfamilistic</i>
Terms of address: "M'Lord," "Dear old friend," "Your faithful, obedient servant," "Meet my boss," "Adios, Amigo."	Terms of address: "George" (to a Pullman porter), "Your Honor," "Sir," "Doctor," "Tex," "Soldier."
Terms of reference: "John's slave," "Your barber," "That is my captain," "(You'll love) my friends."	Terms of reference: "She's a proper Bostonian," "He's a Comrade" (member of a political party), "He (she) is a Scout, a Sophomore, a member of UAW, G.A.R., G.O.P., A.A., Y.M.C.A."

### *Status Terms in General Evolutionary Perspective*

Each of the above criteria of subdivision bears an obvious functional connection to social levels in cultural evolution.

Egocentric terms are personal, in a sense, and are used typically within small face-to-face groups. On the other hand, sociocentric terms

have impersonal referents and have their greatest utility in a larger society where people meet who do not know much about each other's multitude of egocentrically defined social positions. Egocentric terms are prevalent, therefore, in the most primitive societies<sup>2</sup> and within the small family units of larger societies. Sociocentric terms proliferate as society grows larger and more subdivided into corporate groups, ranks, and classes. And later, of course, in urban-industrial societies great numbers of sociocentric terms for occupational specializations which are relevant to social status appear.

The relation of the familistic-nonfamilistic distinction to the evolution of society is even more obvious. The most primitive societies are composed of kindred alone. As these societies grow larger and more complex familistic terms are extended egocentrically and then sociocentrically until a certain point is reached. This point, of course, is the great cultural revolution based on intensive agriculture which transformed tribal society into a much larger, more complex supra-tribal society. This change from a kin-based society to nonkin society has been widely recognized as defining two basic evolutionary stages of society; status terms, both egocentric and sociocentric, are largely familistic in "tribal" (or "gentile") society, but with great numbers of nonfamilistic terms added in "civil" society.

Putting the two different criteria together to make four categories results in a doubly more specific connection between the evolution of society and kinds of status terms. For succinctness I have arranged below the four kinds of terms as stages in one column, matched in the parallel column by the related levels of society. Note that while each stage is given a single characterizing name, this is only for the sake of simplicity; the new terminology is actually *added* to the preceding terms rather than replacing them.

Stage I	
<i>Society</i>	<i>Terminology</i>
A small, isolated kindred.	<i>Egocentric-Familistic Terminology Alone</i> This is merely the usual egocentered "kinship system."

<sup>2</sup> Special conditions yield special results: such a primitive society as the Northern Arunta, for example, have more sociocentric terms—in this case eight "class" terms—than other equally primitive Australian groups because after long periods of wandering as small isolated families and bands they conventionally have very large gatherings ("corroborees") of people who, because of their long periods of isolation, cannot always remember or easily invent the precise egocentric-familistic relationships and therefore substitute the more generalized sociocentric "class" terms.

*Remarks:* This stage is hypothetical and idealized. No known society is completely isolated, but relative isolation is a significant factor and to place a hypothetical familial group in a social vacuum helps make clear the significance of complexity. Only in isolation would a family be altogether without sociocentric terms. If one group of "other" people were present then there would undoubtedly be names for both "we" and "they"—and these names, of course, would be sociocentric. And they would be used as status terms to the extent that social relations occurred between the two groups. The society is "small" enough that the internal social relations are predominantly face-to-face, consistent (hence patterned), and therefore the terms of status relationship are familistic only and egocentric only. There would be no need for sociocentric terms, inasmuch as all the classes of people in such a small society (males-females, young-old, married-unmarried) are known individually and thus sufficiently identifiable by the egocentric kinship terminology.

## Stage II

<i>Society</i>	<i>Terminology</i>
<p>This stage may be thought of as including societies like the average primitive "tribe." It has in it not only domestic families but greater families in some number. They are tied together by broad familistic bonds conceived in terms of individual relationships and also in terms of the relationship of groups, segments, and categories of the society. Corporate groups such as sodalities have appeared in addition to kinship segments of society (moieties, clans, etc.), and classes of persons (those who share some particular characteristic, such as married men, generations, etc.) are now larger and more objectively and impersonally defined.</p>	<p><i>Sociocentric-Familistic Terminology</i></p> <p>Gross familistic categories such as in-law groups, generations, marital statuses, clans, moieties, lineages, and various combinations of these are named and added to the previous system of egocentric-familistic terminology.</p>

*Remarks:* The status terminology is still predominantly familistic because the whole tribe is still conceived of as a great extension of the family. Some of the sociocentric-familistic terms are derived from the egocentric, which is to say that terms like "grandfather" and "brother" may have acquired their original significance, etymologically speaking, from the egocentric usage, but come to be applied in a different context with a different meaning to such classes of persons as various age-grades, male members of a clan, and the like. Other terms, particularly those re-

ferring to corporate groups and segments, may not "sound like" familistic terms (the "Blackmouth clan," for example) because they are not derived from kinship usage, but the group itself nevertheless is defined in familistic terms—it has certain familistic relationships to the whole society and to its various other parts; one clan may be "father" to another, "in-law" to another, etc. At higher levels of tribal society, groups may come into being which are not necessarily nor always familistic—captives ("slaves"), craft specialists, "brave men," dog soldiers, ceremonial clowns, and so on. The transition from egocentric-familistic to socio-centric-familistic and on to the next stage is gradual and cumulative just as is the increasing complexity of society. The concepts used here are watertight compartments, but actual societies occupy transitional positions between the stages.

### Stage III

<i>Society</i>	<i>Terminology</i>
<p>Society is the non-industrialized civil type, standing between tribal society and urban-industrial nations. "Feudal" society could be included (but see below). All, or many, of the elements making up the societies of the first two stages may be present, but the society is now larger and more complex and has certain new elements such as socio-economic classes, political or bureaucratic offices, clearly delineated rich and poor, and other new kinds of criteria of social position.</p>	<p><i>Egocentric-Nonfamilistic Terminology</i></p> <p>This stage has terminology which is egocentric, but for the first time, non-familistic. "(My, his, so-and-so's) Lord, vassal, page, maid, cook," and so on are examples. Titles which refer to hereditary bureaucratic positions and/or positions in relation to other persons are frequent. In reference, titles are often sociocentric, but in address are more frequently egocentric ("My," "your," etc. being understood if not actually stated).</p>

*Remarks:* Society is now of a supra-kinship order and therefore terms which refer to nonfamilistic statuses become more prevalent. Many of these, however, depend on the character of the relationship to other persons, hence egocentric terms are common even when they are non-familistic. This is not to say that familistic terms, both egocentric and sociocentric, do not continue in use. And as any particular society may contain a greater or lesser number of corporate groupings, occupational specializations, clubs, and so on, so it may have many or few sociocentric-nonfamilistic terms. This stage is not named because of the *predominance in use* of one or another kind of terminology, but because the new appearance of this particular kind of terminology may be fairly taken to characterize it. The fact that nonfamilistic positions have arisen in this society, but that many of them continue to take their significance from



personal relationships, is a point that has been remarked often, particularly with respect to feudalism—it is a society “impersonal in content but personal in phrasing.”

But a difficulty has arisen at this point that must be faced. As culture evolves it creates more and more heterogeneous societies; specific evolutionary lines ramify and adapt to more diverse kinds of situations. To take as one stage all societies which are supra-tribal but infra-industrial is to include a tremendous variety of kinds of socio-cultural systems: city-states with no hinterland living by maritime trade (like 5th century B.C. Athens, 12th century A.D. Venice), great colonial empires (like Rome), a stultified remnant of an empire (late Byzantium), feudal France, the Tahiti of Pomare I, and the Inca of Peru, for examples. I do not know, in fact, precisely what I should list as the average social characteristics of society at this stage in the evolution of culture. To compound the difficulty, I think of European feudalism, because it was the society immediately preceding the commercial-industrial revolution in Europe, as a particular and peculiar historic precursor in the specific adaptive sense rather than as a fair example of the evolutionary stage, yet one wants to consider it more fully than, say, the Inca state precisely because it has this intimate local historical connection to the first appearance of the next evolutionary stage.

To solve the problem posed by all of the heterogeneity included in the present category would not be impossible. Each society would show peculiarities in its status terminologies equal to and understandable in terms of the peculiarities of its social system, as well as a commensurate heterogeneity. Feudal society could be shown to have more terms based on relationship to land and to personal hierarchies, but few based on occupational specialization or wealth. As commercialism supervenes, as in the maritime cities of Northern Italy, the egocentric-nonfamilistic terms would recede in significance and sociocentric-nonfamilistic terms relating to wealth, political office, and professional specialization would arise. If all these various kinds of societies were studied from this general perspective, the functional relationship of nomenclatural patterns to kinds of social organization would become ever more apparent and more “proven” in specific ways, but to pursue the point for the purpose of the present argument would overly burden this part of the paper.

#### Stage IV

<i>Society</i>	<i>Terminology</i>
With modern industrialism, society expanded rapidly—exploded—with the increased size and density accompanied by much greater complexity. The number of social positions based	<p><i>Sociocentric-Nonfamilistic Terminology</i></p> <p>The number of possible status terms of this sort in modern industrial society is tremendous. There are titles</p>

on economic specialization and membership in corporate groups increased commensurately and is the most noticeable aspect of the new stage.

("Doctor," "Mister," "Professor") now which do not refer to personal ties; names of economic, social, and political categories of people, as well as specific gradations within them; named professional specialties; and great numbers of corporate groups having special purposes like clubs, labor unions, and organizations in general. None of these terms are familistic and obviously they are all sociocentric.

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*Remarks:* There is probably no need to elaborate the above. It may be well to remark, however, that although the anterior kinds of terminologies are retained in each successive stage, they may also undergo certain changes related to the general social changes. Egocentric-familistic terms from the first stage are still in use, but the system has altered in the direction of specifying individual descent lines (the "descriptive" system) as the domestic family becomes nucleated, isolated, neolocal, smaller, and as individual inheritance of property becomes more significant.<sup>3</sup> Also, these terms are less used as family ties decline in importance and others gain. Certain sociocentric-familistic terms disappear as clans, moieties, corporate descent groups, and the like disappear from the society. Egocentric-nonfamilistic terms are less prominent also, as society becomes depersonalized. (A servant, for example, is less a personal dependent nowadays and more a member of a profession, perhaps even a member of a labor union.) It seems possible, in the light of these trends, that the Brave New World of the future might come to have sociocentric-nonfamilistic terms only. Even now in many modern families children address their parents by name rather than as father and mother.

### *Conclusion and Further Remarks*

The question posed was this: If kinship terminology has some close functional relation to society, then why are there no apparent large and qualitative differences in the terminological systems as stages of simple to complex societies are compared? Either there is no value in the general evolutionary perspective or there is no important functional connection between terminological systems and society. I have assumed that the difficulty lay in our failure to describe the latter—the function—clearly and to lay out appropriate discriminations among kinds of no-

<sup>3</sup> Gertrude E. Dole (1957) wrote an interesting dissertation which shows the specific adaptive changes in kinship (egocentric-familistic) terminologies alone as they are related to techno-economic aspects of cultural evolution.

menclatural systems. This assumption means that the problem is conceptual rather than factual.

I have turned to a general category, status terms, which includes kinship terms within it as a sub-species. This broader class of terms can be related to all parts of a society and all kinds of societies. Kinship terms, which I have had to rename "egocentric-familistic status terms," are related to a simple familistic kind of society or to only one small part of complex societies, the family. It is apparent that status terms in general obviously do increase in number and kind as society becomes more complex, and further: new kinds of status terms appear as new types of social relations appear, one kind predominating over another kind as the related characteristic of society itself becomes more prominent. Kinship systems (egocentric-familistic systems) do not evolve by themselves as society evolves because they are related to social circumstances and to parts of society—face-to-face, personal circumstances and family groups—which recede in relative importance as society is altered toward greater size and complexity. If anything, taking a very long view of it, egocentric-familistic systems have *devolved*, and some day may even disappear.

In the opening pages I mentioned that there are further uses for some of the new categories of terminology in certain limited and specific problems. At this point it is feasible to describe a few of them very briefly.

The distinction between egocentric and sociocentric terminology is useful in explaining the origin, purpose, and distribution of the two-, four-, and eight-class systems in Australia. The difficulty posed by the Australian class systems seems to me to be largely resolved by this device. Both class terms ("moieties," "sections," and "subsections" in Radcliffe-Brown's terminology) and kinship terms have to do with familistic statuses but differ in that class terms are sociocentric and kinship terms egocentric. From this perspective, considering the different usages and context of sociocentric terms from egocentric terms, it becomes a simple matter to move to an explanation of the variations in the class systems. It is not spelled out here because a whole essay has been devoted to the subject elsewhere.

A problem which seems to be of wide interest is Murdock's classification of Yankee New England "social structure" with that of the Eskimo. Mishkin's review of Murdock's *Social Structure* was very critical on this point and it still bothers people today. Murdock's reasons for bracketing such dissimilar societies together, however, depend only on the similarity in certain kin term usages and certain characteristics of family life. Thus, that which is compared is the family form and its related egocentric-familistic terminology, not two whole societies. There *are* some similarities between Eskimo families and New England families, and in their respective egocentric terminology, but obviously the socie-

ties as wholes, and their status terminologies in general, are almost polar extremes of dissimilarity. The family and its egocentric nomenclature is only a tiny aspect of modern social life. Murdock's use of the term "social structure" when he is referring to characteristics of the family alone has made for confusion, a confusion which can be dispelled by the use of distinctions such as those proposed in this paper.

The problem of the lack of fit of the simple Hawaiian or generational kinship terminology with the associated complexity of such societies as the Polynesian or Inca is similarly bothersome. Here again we see that if we speak of status terminology rather than kinship terminology this particular problem no longer exists. The Polynesians, Inca, Kwakiutl, Cheyenne, and others with the generational kinship system do have systems of *status terminology* as complicated as the complexity of their respective societies demands, but the systems include many terms which are not egocentric-familistic. Sociocentric terms, familistic and nonfamilistic, referring to social positions based on rank, birth order, age-sets, status as warrior and other specialties have become more important in social life than some of the egocentric-familistic terms of genealogical relationship.

The way in which the use of sociocentric terms may overcome "kinship" terms and replace them is described for a Fijian island by M. D. Sahlins:

. . . when differences in community-wide political rank become very great, kin terms and usages are likely to be dropped altogether. It is somewhat improper for low-ranking people—especially out-villagers—to readily extend their kinship to the highest Naroians by classificatory means. . . . "In the custom of the land," it is said, "the descent [kawa] of chiefs and that of lesser people do not go together." Even where kinship to high chiefs is openly acknowledged on both sides, it is still not correct to address chiefs as ordinary relatives. The use of kin terms would be "great presumption," "great ambition". . . . People of less status address those of extremely high rank by their political (chiefly) title when appropriate, and usually with the very respectful term, *saka*, "sir." Even at this level of social development the opposition between kin and political status is manifest, and large-scale rank differences impose limitations on the extension of kin terminology and behavior.

An analogous reduction in the egocentric kinship system by the intrusion of sociocentric terms is the characteristic of the so-called Crow and Omaha patterns. L. A. White proposed that the very widespread Iroquois (or Dakota or bifurcate-merging) system of kinship terminology became Crow or Omaha by the intrusion of clan terminology into a part of the kinship system. Murdock has approved of this argument. From the point of view of this paper, we too can accept White's reasoning. We could say that sociocentric-familistic terms had replaced certain egocentric-familistic terms as the Iroquois system became Crow or

Omaha (whether they are clan terms or of some other kind of kin grouping).

We can also say that the range of the Crow-Omaha type of kinship system, which includes so many quite dissimilar societies, does not constitute a problem because it can be established that their total systems of status terms are just as dissimilar from each other as their respective social systems. In these cases the dissimilarity lies in the sociocentric status terms, however, and not in the egocentric-familistic "kinship" system.

There is a further point to make with respect to Crow-Omaha systems. White argued that the Crow and Omaha terminologies constitute an evolutionary advance over the Dakota-Iroquois system, which is to say that they *grew out of* the Dakota-Iroquois system as their clans matured. (It would be specific evolution from the point of view of this paper.) This particular point has been always difficult for me to understand. The Crow or Omaha clans do not appear to be any more "mature" than those of the Iroquois. Perhaps the classification of kinds of status terminology made in this paper has some relevance to this problem.

First of all, we do not want to say that the Crow and Omaha types are more evolved as *complete patterns* of nomenclature than the Iroquois when the only alteration in them is that some of their terms have gone out of use because of the intrusion of a different kind of terminology. We should be restricted to a comparison of egocentric-familistic systems alone (and these normally are the "kinship systems") or we should compare the totality of the status terms. The Iroquois system is described in such a way that it includes *only* egocentric-familistic terms; the Crow and Omaha, as ordinarily described, include egocentric-familistic terms *and* certain sociocentric ones. If we compare comparables, the egocentric-familistic terms of the Iroquois with only the egocentric-familistic terms of the Omaha or Crow tribes, then we see they are identical except for some blank entries in the Crow-Omaha charts. This does not constitute a case of evolution if the egocentric-familistic systems alone are being compared. But if the totality of status terms are compared, then it becomes a very different problem. Possibly the Iroquois would come out ahead in total number and variety of kinds of nomenclature (and thus evidence a somewhat *higher* social development), but I am not going to argue it here.

A new question now appears. *Why* has sociocentric terminology intruded on the egocentric terminology in the case of the Crow and Omaha types and not in the Iroquois, when the Iroquois do in fact have well-established clans? It's a good question and I cannot answer it. The fact that sociocentric terminology is usually employed among more socially distant people, that it is a more impersonal terminology, gives us a hint, however, that the intrusion of sociocentric terminology in these cases is probably a function of greater social (perhaps even geographic) distance

between a group and the other relatives designated by sociocentric terminology. At any rate, I think that the service performed at this point is to reveal that this is a question that has not yet been satisfactorily answered. And the route to an answer may be smoother and straighter if the distinctions between kinds of status nomenclatures are recognized, particularly the egocentric-sociocentric dichotomy.

In each of the examples discussed above, the problem is simplified, if not solved, by distinguishing egocentric from sociocentric nomenclature. The egocentric-familistic system of the eight-class Northern Arunta is not in any way unusual or unexpected; it is not "complex" or aberrant compared to the nomenclature of other hunters and gatherers. It is peculiar only if we *add* the sociocentric terms (the class terms) to the egocentric system. But if we do this then we should add the sociocentric terms used by the other societies we compare with the Arunta, and this is not normally done. Hawaiian kinship terminologies may be seen as peculiar also—too simple for the complex societies that have them—but again we find that the problem exists because we have excluded sociocentric and nonfamilistic terms. In the case of the Crow-Omaha problem, sociocentric terms have been included in the "kinship system" but excluded in the Dakota-Iroquois when they are compared.

## 22 Social Distance and the Veil<sup>1</sup>



Robert F. Murphy

THERE IS MORE TO SOCIAL STRUCTURE THAN KINSHIP. FUNDAMENTALLY, *whether one is dealing with relatives, friends, or strangers it is a matter of interaction. The interesting questions, of course, have to do with the things that determine how these interactions will take place, and what their quality will be. "Togetherness" is only part of the story, although it usually gets the lion's share of treatment. Equally important is apartness—that is, social distance.*

*Murphy's essay is more than an analysis of an important aspect of social relations. It reflects the anthropological interest in the general couched in the analysis of the particular. Social distance is a universal social feature, but heavily veiled men are peculiar to the Tuareg. Murphy's discussion of Tuareg specifics and social distance generalities makes*

<sup>1</sup> This article emerges from fieldwork carried out among the Tuareg during 1959-60. The research was supported by a Foreign Area Training Fellowship, granted by the Ford Foundation, and by the Social Science Research Council, which awarded me a Faculty Research Fellowship for the period 1957-60. I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to these organizations and to the Research Committee and the Institute of Social Sciences of the University of California, Berkeley, for their generous support. Several colleagues have been of assistance to me in the formulation of this paper, but I am particularly indebted to Dr. Erving Goffman for his stimulation and criticism.

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us wonder about life in kibbutzim and communes and also in great gray cities.

The article also displays the anthropologist's chronic concern with the reasons lying behind institutions. Why should Tuareg men veil themselves and suffer constant petty inconveniences such as difficulty in eating and the avoidance of tobacco smoking? Murphy shows how several straightforward "logical" explanations, such as the desire to protect oneself from inhaling dust, simply fail to account for actual practice. His alternative, an elegant functional explanation set in the context of Tuareg social organization, not only fits the data better than other explanations but is also a delight to read.

*The company scatters, the lights go out, the song dies, the guitars grow silent, as they approach the habitations of man. Put on your masks; you are again among your brothers.*

JOSÉ RIZAL in *Noli Me Tangere*

This is an essay on the means by which man promotes the establishment of social relationships and the maintenance of social interaction through aloofness, removal, and reserve. It attempts, on one level, to present a functional interpretation of a curious Tuareg custom, but, in a more general sense, the paper undertakes an exposition of certain dialectical processes in social life.

The question I have asked of a body of field data is very simply: why do Tuareg males cover their faces so completely that only areas around the eyes and nose may be seen? We will come back to this matter in greater detail, but, for introductory purposes, my answer is that by doing so, they are symbolically introducing a form of distance between their selves and their social others. The veil, though providing neither isolation nor anonymity, bestows facelessness and the idiom of privacy upon its wearer and allows him to stand somewhat aloof from the perils of social interaction while remaining a part of it.

### *Social Distance*

It is not my purpose to become involved in a general exegesis on the subject of social distance, privacy and reserve, and I wish in these prefatory comments only to inform the reader of the theoretical framework within which I am operating. This study rests heavily on ideas first advanced by Georg Simmel, especially upon his delineation of self-revelation and self-restraint as necessary qualities of all social relationships, rather than as mutually exclusive categories applying to some relationships as opposed to others. For Simmel, distance was inversely related to the amount of knowledge of each other available to actors. This knowledge can never approximate completeness, however, for he stresses that the



sphere of knowledge is determined by the type of relationship and, more important, that the actor's self-revelations are filtered to produce what he calls "a teleologically determined non-knowledge of one another." An area of privacy, then, is maintained by all, and reserve and restraint are common, though not constant, factors in all social relationships. Society could not perdure if people knew too much of one another, and one may also ask, following Simmel, if the individual could endure as a social person under the burden of complete self-awareness.

Further writing on the subject of social distance rests only on a part of Simmel's work and has tended to emphasize distance as an inverse function of affect. Shibutani, in a recent work, sees social distance to lie along an axis between "sentiments" and "conventional norms," a usage closely related to Bogardus' criterion of "the degrees of sympathetic understandings" that obtain between persons or groups. Distance scaling using these standards has been extensively applied to certain problems in modern industrial society, and generations of undergraduates have answered questionnaires oriented towards data on rate and kind of interaction between groups and on preferences of propinquity. Of central concern is the axis between antipathy and affection, as expressed in marriage, residence, and other choices. Norms regulating interaction between groups in our own society may thus be ascertained, but the social anthropologist would be hard put to derive comparable results by asking a Tiv if he would live next to his mother's brother. Or marry a father's brother's daughter. I would suggest that recent sociological writing on social distance has often departed from Simmel's original work and is more reflective of Western society than interpretative of Society. Knowledge of the other does not necessarily involve sentiment, nor is the expression of sentiment always based upon knowledge. Quite the opposite is often the case in ordinary life, and to Simmel knowledge was more closely related to penetration of the identity and intrusion into closed areas.

Since Simmel, the requirement of privacy in society has been discussed by such writers as Park and Burgess and more recently by Merton in his treatment of role segregation. Merton notes the dilemma imposed by the assumption of multiple roles and the fact that the members of the actor's various role sets have differing and sometimes contradictory expectations of him. He then proceeds to the self-evident proposition that, if these expectations are to be maintained and conformity to the role model assured, the actor must insulate these various activities and sometimes the role sets and sub-sets themselves. In short, if social interaction is to be made possible, a public life must be at one and the same time a private life.

In many types of role, this separation is assured by a restriction of information within the confines of the role set. The doctor takes care to

give minimal information about his profession to the patient (and often minimal information on the patient's ailment), and the husband-wife set guards its intimacies with jealousy. This imposition of distance on the parameters of the role set does more than make other roles possible, for it promotes the solidarity of the relationship itself. In this sense, many role sets are effective secret societies. Just as the impersonator of a god must wear a mask to erase his other *roles*—for everybody surely knows who he *is*—the actor in the profane situation must stylize his impersonation of the moment in such a way that he can be at some future moment one of the many other persons he is thought to be.

The above discussion takes us finally to the problem of the individual identity and the concept of the self. Goffman has written eloquently on the person as a sacred object, a bearer of demeanor and a recipient of deference, and argues that the individual's sense of worth and significance is threatened by his vulnerability and penetrability. These sources of weakness arise, of course, out of the fact that we are of necessity social beings and, of equal necessity, require some stable definition of ourselves if we are to effectively interact with social others. Beyond this, the self is the object of our own attachment, and identity is by its nature conservative. One of the great human dilemmas, following George Herbert Mead, derives from the premise that the concept of the self is bestowed upon us by society and through social interaction. But these very processes are at one and the same time testing this identity and working to change it; senescence and altered circumstance, then, conspire in an erosion of, and sometimes assault upon, the ego. Interaction is threatening by definition, and reserve, here seen as an aspect of distance, serves to provide partial and temporary protection to the self.

Beyond the above strictures on identity, the expression of distance in one form or another promotes autonomy of action. That the privacy obtained makes other roles more viable has already been discussed, but reserve in the playing of one particular role is also an essential ingredient of interaction. Here the actor allows the other enough cues so that the game may go on, but withholds sufficient stimuli so that his further course of action cannot be fully predicted. This not only gives him flexibility, but by decreasing the show of emotional attachment to the means and also the end of action he is not trapped into commitment. More simply, and elegantly, this is what is known as "playing it cool."

Of central importance in this paper, the display of distance in social relationships is crucial in settings of ambivalence and ambiguity. Here flexibility and autonomy are essential because the outcome of the transaction cannot be predicted, because contrary interests are involved or because of some special indeterminacy in the situation. We joke with the person who is in the midst of radical status change, just as many peoples do with a cross-cousin. A senior affine may not always be avoided, but he

is generally accorded some patterned and stylized treatment. And the person about whom we know little is treated with constraint and reserve if absence of embarrassment is to be assured; this is the converse of Simmel's measure of distance by knowledge of the other.

It would follow from the above that the expression of distance would occur just as commonly, if not more so, in our intimate associations as in our more marginal ones. Where knowledge of the other is minimal, the actor need know only that he is dealing with the butcher, the baker, or some *other* social *thing*. The actor gives socially and personally nothing more than the situation requires for accomplishment of a task. On the other hand, as the sphere of knowledge increases, the defenses about certain residual private spheres must be correspondingly strengthened. It is these intimate relationships, commonly the most affect-laden and central to the life of the individual, most difficult to maintain, and most ambivalent, which are most demanding of expressions of distance, however elusive and subtle these may be. This was best expressed by Simmel in the concluding lines of his famous discussion of marriage:

The fertile depth of relations suspects and honors something even more ultimate behind every ultimateness revealed; it daily challenges us to reconquer even secure possessions. But this depth is only the reward for that tenderness and self-discipline which, even in the most intimate relation that comprises the total individual, respects his inner private property, and allows the right to question to be limited by the right to secrecy.

This is the real meaning of Simmel's use of knowledge as a measure of distance, for he understood well that familiarity, carried too far, breeds threat as well as contempt.

In summary, social distance is here viewed as a pervasive factor in human relationships and the necessary corollary of association. The more common usage of the term sees it as a spacing between individuals and groups, determinative of rate of interaction and reinforced by consciously felt attitudes. This gross, structural sense of the term is but one expression of the general phenomenon of distance, however, and I have briefly noted its manifestation as privacy and reserve in small scale interaction settings, as well as its relevance for the sociology of identity.

The intensity and form of distance, as well as its areas of occurrence, are variant and a function of social systems. It is inadequate to comment merely that distance mechanisms are found in society, and we must also inquire into the symbolic means of its expressions and the relationship of these symbols to other cultural factors. And given my, by no means original, hypothesis that distance may be found pronouncedly in ambivalent relationships, we must search out those sectors of the social system and analyze the function of distance in maintaining the social order. Finally, just as the territorial requirements of different species of animals

vary, it might be that human spacing, accomplished by symbolic, cultural means, is similarly different from one society to another. We will pursue this inquiry and seek the structural reasons for such variation.

### *The Tuareg*

Even in the eyes of the experienced and well-traveled anthropologist, the Tuareg are a strange and exotic people. The French appellation of "les hommes bleus" is most appropriate, for in their finest robes of indigo-dyed cotton, and with blue veils falling from the bridge of the nose to below the chin, little shows of them except hands, feet and the area around their eyes. Even the small exposed sections of skin have a blue tinge, the result of the dye rubbing off the cloth, and the overall impression given by one of the fully armed warriors is almost awesome. No accurate census exists for the Tuareg but their numbers are estimated at about a quarter of a million. Their language is one of the Hamitic group, and it is closely related to the Berber of the Mediterranean littoral. This is their genetic affinity also, and the Tuareg are basically a Caucasoid people of Mediterranean type, though there has been a good deal of admixture, especially among the Sudanese and Sahelian Tuareg, with the Negroid peoples who live in their midst and to the south. There is no single, unified Tuareg tribe, and when we speak of them as an entity it is only to signify a people having common characteristics of race, language, and custom, as distinguished from their neighbors. There are deep and lasting enmities between different political federations of Tuareg, and, as should be expected, there are significant differences in dialect and culture throughout their vast territory. This area covers a large section of the Territoire des Oases in southern Algeria, and the northern parts of Mali and Niger. There is a slight extension of Tuareg into Libya, and their caravans reach Haute Volta, Nigeria, Chad, Morocco and other African countries. Though some Tuareg are sedentarized in Saharan oases or in farming communities of the northern Sudan, most are nomadic pastoralists, tending flocks of camels, sheep, goats, and in their southern extension, cattle. They are usually identified as dwellers of the Sahara desert, but the large majority of the population lives outside this forbidding and impoverished zone, tending their flocks in the richer pastures of the northern Sudan and the Sahel, the belt of savannah between the Sudan and the true desert.

The southeastern Tuareg of the Tanout and Agades districts, among whom I worked, are aligned in a number of major tribal confederations based on regional contiguity and traditional amity. These functioned mainly in time of war and today have diminished political significance. The component tribes of these federations are territory holding units under a chief whose powers are limited by traditional Tuareg egalitarianism

and the countervailing power of the notables of the tribe. These tribes are commonly further divided into sub-tribes, each of which is under the leadership of a lesser chief and has a territorial locus. Both tribe and sub-tribe are conceived to be descent groups, the members of which acknowledge a common ancestry, but the mutual kinship of their members is putative and no genealogies of any depth or comprehensiveness are kept except in chiefly lines. Below the sub-tribe is the fundamental unit of Tuareg society, the *iriwan*, or house, which consists of some 50 to several hundred people who reside about a well to which they hold rights and who pasture their herds in the surrounding land. The name of each *iriwan* is taken from the name of its leader, who is acknowledged as the most notable member of the group, and as at the levels of segmentation of tribe and sub-tribe, it is a local-political-kin group. Kin ties are demonstrably closer in the *iriwan* than at higher levels, however, and its members feel themselves to share close bonds of consanguinity and, as we will see, affinity.

In addition to the differentiation of the population along tribal lines, Tuareg society is divided into three distinct and endogamic classes. The true Tuareg consist of the politically dominant noble tribes, or *imajaren*, and their vassals, or *imrad*. Each noble tribe exacts tribute and fealty from one or more vassal tribes, both noble and vassal tribes acting as corporate entities in their interrelations. The members of each class hold property individually in slaves, or *iklen*, who act as herdsmen and servants for their masters. The slaves are of Saharan and Sudanese Negroid origin, but most cannot trace their ancestry beyond slave status among the Tuareg. In language and in most aspects of their culture they are much like their masters, despite certain differences which are not the subject of this paper. Tuareg stratification has broken down in recent years, for French colonial rule loosened the political hold of the nobles over their vassal tribes, and many members of the slave class have been manumitted in accordance with government policy. But even where the traditional ties have been severed, the classes remain distinct as status groups, and membership in one class or another is the single most important criterion of a Tuareg's worth and standing.

The Tuareg, like their neighbors on all sides, are Moslem. They are noted, however, as infamous and unregenerate back-sliders who observe neither proper law nor custom, who misperform the ritual postures in prayer, fail to make ablutions, eat and drink during the fasting days of Ramadan, and who have few of the wise and holy in their ranks. Despite the best Tuareg efforts to simulate orthodoxy in the presence of their censorious neighbors, these charges are substantially true.

One of their most obvious points of heterodoxy is in the treatment of their women. The Tuareg woman enjoys privileges unknown to her sex

in most Moslem societies. She is not kept in seclusion nor is she diffident about expressing her opinions publicly, though positions of formal leadership are in the hands of the men. Frequently beautiful and commonly mercurial in temperament, she places little value upon pre-marital chastity, stoutly defends the institution of monogamy after marriage, maintains the right to continue to see her male friends, and secures a divorce merely by demanding it—and she is allowed to keep the children. The shock of early Arab travelers at this state of affairs is understandable and was aggravated by the fact that the men were veiled and the women were not.

The high status of the Tuareg woman is linked to their traditional matrilineality. Among many Tuareg tribes, especially those in the southern part of the territory, matrilineality has disappeared or become severely attenuated and has been replaced by a patrilineal mode of descent or a bilateral one. In the traditional system, still in force in many tribes, group membership is determined matrilineally and office passes through the male sibling group and then to the eldest son of the eldest sister. Tuareg matrilineality is, however, a curious institution and should not be equated with the rule as we usually know it. Most rules of unilineal descent are, of course, associated with a corresponding rule that marriage is exogamic to the descent group, but among the Tuareg the group is endogamic. There is a decided preference among the Tuareg for cousin marriage of all types. In addition to the Koranic preference for the daughter of the father's brother, it is considered good to marry the daughter of the mother's brother or sister, and the father's sister's daughter also is an acceptable partner. Despite these preferences, marriages are usually not between first cousins, and the ideal of cousin marriage should be looked on as the ultimate idiom of a more general preference for endogamy. This pertains first to the local-political-kin group, or *iriwan*, which is an in-marrying unit as well as the most close-knit aggregation of kinsmen. After the *iriwan*, marriage is preferentially endogamic in the sub-tribe, the tribe, and the tribal confederation, in that order. Tuareg marriage preferences should be borne closely in mind because they are highly pertinent to our discussion of veiling practices. For present purposes, however, it should be noted that endogamy vitiates the rule of descent by making it an academic point in an in-marriage, inasmuch as both mother and father belong to the same group and so also will the children. And, more important, the setting of the boundaries of the kin group by endogamy rather than exogamy makes the Tuareg social system unique and typologically different from most other systems of kinship. The veiling of the men is a most strange custom, but it occurs in a most strange and baffling society. We will now turn to our attempt to impose rationality upon the bizarre.

### *The Social Uses of the Veil*

The Tuareg veil, or *tegelmoust* in the Air Tuareg dialect, is the distinguishing characteristic of dress of this people. The standard Tuareg raiment consists of an underrobe and a flowing outer garment that extends from shoulders to ankles. The underrobe is sleeveless, but the outer garb has loose wide sleeves ideal for carrying the long daggers that are worn in sheaths strapped to the arm. These robes are either blue or white; some Tuareg affect a blue outer garment and a white inner one, while others adopt the opposite mode. Still others wear either all blue or all white. The more expensive cloth is the blue, and it is quite common for a man to wear various mixtures of blue and white for ordinary dress but to reserve an all blue ensemble for festive occasions. The most expensive item of dress, however, is the blue turban and veil, a long bolt of cloth that is made up of narrow strips of cloth sewn together. This special cloth is made and dyed in Nigeria and a good specimen may cost well over twenty-five dollars, a large sum of money to most Tuareg. A Tuareg who cannot afford this price, or who simply wishes a veil for everyday use, will generally use a bolt of ordinary white or blue cloth, but it is worn in much the same manner as the expensive kind. The art of putting on the veil is not easily mastered but, quite simply, the cloth is wrapped about the head to form a low turban and the end is then brought across the face, the top of the cloth falling across the nose and the bottom hanging well below the chin. The resultant effect is that the only part of the face showing is the area across the plane of the eyes. Raised to its extreme height, only a narrow slit is left open and even the eyes can barely be seen. There are situational differences in the actual attitude of the veil and the amount of face that the wearer exposes, but this is a key part of my analysis and will be discussed more fully below.

Whatever may be the precise position of the veil in different social settings, the most striking fact is that it is worn almost continually. The veil is worn when at home or traveling, during the evening or the day, when eating and smoking, and some even sleep veiled. That this is not simply a casual mode of costume is manifest when one watches a group of Tuareg men eating. Whether using spoons or their fingers, or drinking milk from a calabash, the veil is not lowered for the food to be passed to the mouth; rather, the proper Tuareg carefully raises the veil enough to enable him to eat but not far enough for his mouth to be seen. The occasional Tuareg who lowers his veil to eat reveals his low status as either a slave or a member of a vassal tribe—a member of a noble tribe does not expose his mouth. The veil has even inhibited the diffusion of that most pervasive habit, smoking. An occasional Tuareg would accept a proffered cigarette and proceed to smoke it by holding it gingerly under

the veil—it was suspenseful to watch them light it. Most, however, take tobacco mixed with lime, and pack this mixture in their cheek or behind the lower lip, thus eliminating the obvious dangers of smoking. The constancy of veil wearing was once impressed upon me when I encountered in Kano, Nigeria, a rather deviant and renegade young Tuareg who was flamboyantly dressed in yellow plastic shoes, blue shorts, a checked sport shirt—and the turban and veil. It is not only the hallmark of the Tuareg but their most unchanging item of clothing.

Such a unique custom has not been without its interpreters, and I will give and discuss a few of the more common, and obvious, reasons advanced for veiling. Most explanations have been of the 'origin' type, though my prefatory remarks indicate that mine is quite clearly of a structural and functional kind. Even these origin theories, however, indicate that the custom persists for the same obvious utility that it had in its incipience, and it is worthwhile and pertinent to consider them. The first, of course, is that the veil keeps out the sand and dust of the desert and steppes. It does indeed do this, and during the dry season Kanuri, Hausa, Teda and other traders commonly wrap the ends of their turbans across their mouths and noses while on caravan, much in the manner of the American cowboy driving a herd to market. But the Tuareg also wear their veils during the rainy season when there is little dust, and when sitting within the confines of their huts. Moreover, the veil is not worn until a youth approaches the manly state, at about the age of seventeen, and it is exactly the unveiled youths, and slaves, who do much of the dusty work of herding. It should also be remembered that the women go unveiled whatever the atmospheric condition; in fact, women only pull their shawls across the lower parts of their faces when expressing reserve and modesty.

The French explorer Henri Duveyrier noted and refuted this argument in 1864 and raised also the question of whether the veil disguised the Tuareg from their enemies. The ethnographer can only agree with his observation that the Tuareg recognize each other despite the veils and that this explanation is beside the point. I might add, however, that the Tuareg wear the veil highest and conceal their faces most completely when among many of those who are closest to them and know quite well who they are; they are sometimes most lax in the wearing of the veil when among non-Tuareg, exactly those from whom they could conceal their identity most successfully by veiling.

The Tuareg can probably recognize others among their range of acquaintances as rapidly and at as great a distance as Europeans, for they use a broad range of means of identification other than the face. First, every Tuareg affects a slightly different style of dress by varying the colors of the various items of apparel and individualizing the mode of wearing them. Second, the Tuareg are even more sensitized to the com-



mon criteria of identity given by stature and body set than are we, and they use a series of other cues from the exposed parts of the body. One Tuareg claimed that, though he had left home as an unveiled boy and returned five years later veiled, his sister recognized him by his feet. Even the non-Tuareg accustoms himself to these forms of recognition, as was forceably brought home to me on one occasion when a Tuareg friend approached me for the first time unveiled and I failed to recognize him. The source of my confusion is evident; he had disguised himself by adding facial cues rather than subtracting them.

The question of identification raises a series of interesting problems, for face reading and mouthwork are virtually absent among the Tuareg as media of communication. The first months of field ethnography among a totally unfamiliar people are disturbing to the anthropologist because of his inability to accurately assay the meaning of both verbal and non-verbal responses from his subjects. Among the Tuareg, these difficulties are aggravated by the fact that entire zones around the nose, mouth, chin and throat, from which he is so accustomed to make inferences about the subjective state of the other, are concealed to him. He notes that the Tuareg is not a mouth-watcher, but rather an eye-watcher and that during interaction his eyes are fixed by the steady stare of his respondent. On one occasion, I countered this by wearing dark glasses, but my Tuareg friends retaliated by the same technique and succeeded in totally effacing themselves. Everything is watched and used as a cue. The position of the eyelids, the lines and wrinkles of the eyes and nose, the set of the body and the tone of voice are all part of the Tuareg's gestalt of the situation, and the outsider must adapt himself to this and learn to control these stimuli in himself and observe them in the other if he is to correctly interpret the behavior of his subjects. It would be a mistake then to assume that the veiling practice, among a people who are accustomed to the continual wearing of the veil, *totally* conceals the disposition of the actor to a certain course of action: quite clearly, this would be the negation of social interaction. Rather, this curious article of apparel cuts down the total range of stimuli that can be emitted and received and makes for a diffuseness of Ego's behavioral stance. Beyond this, and perhaps of greater importance, by concealing the primary communication zone of the mouth region the Tuareg decreases his vulnerability to others by *symbolically* removing himself from the interaction; he becomes less labile before the world. It is their quality of remoteness that strikes the outside observer, and it is congruent with the Tuareg's own expressed feelings of exposure and defenselessness when he is unveiled.

It is exactly the feeling of openness and the corresponding sentiment of shame expressed by the Tuareg as their reason for wearing the veil which is our principal clue to an understanding of the custom. When asked to explain the usage, the Tuareg informant will simply say that it

would be shameful to show his mouth among his people. This sense of shame suggests that the veil is connected with privacy and withdrawal, and these sentiments are consistent with the comments at the outset of this article upon the nature of social distance. It suggests also that the exposure of the mouth is a violation of the moral order, a transgression that lowers the prestige of the offender and his own self-esteem. The restrictions surrounding the use of the veil are rigid and highly formalized, and we can well infer that they impinge upon vital areas of social life.

The place of the veil in the social system is best seen in its specific, situational uses, and variation in style according to the mood and situation of the wearer is vividly described by Henri Lhote:

The style of wearing the veil, of placing the different parts about the head, may vary from one tribe to another and some individuals give their preference, according to personal taste, to certain local styles. . . . But beside these different fashions, there is also the turn, the knack which makes it more or less elegant. Similarly there is a psychology of the veil; by the way in which it is set, one can gain an idea of the mood of the wearer just as among us the angle of the cap or hat permits analogous deductions. There is the reserved and modest style used when one enters a camp where there are women, the elegant and *recherchée* style for going to courting parties, the haughty manner of warriors conscious of their own importance, like the whimsy of the blustering vassal or slave. There is also the detached and lax fashion of the jovial fellow, the good chap, or the disordered one of the unstable man of irritable character. The veil may also express a transient sentiment. For example, *it is brought up to the eyes before women or prestigious persons, while it is a sign of familiarity when it is lowered*. To laugh from delight with a joke, the Tuareg will lift up the lower part of his veil very high on his nose, and, in case of irritation, will tighten it like a chin strap to conceal his anger (*Italics mine*).

The veil, then, is not a fixed article of clothing to be worn either uniformly or relaxedly. Most Tuareg are continually adjusting and readjusting the veil, changing the height at which it is worn, tugging on the lower part of it, tightening its ends beneath the turban and straightening its folds. The observer soon notes that, though there is a certain element of random primping involved, the different individuals in a group will readjust their veils as the tone of relationships subtly shifts or persons enter or leave the setting.

The Tuareg are notable for their haughty and arrogant demeanor. They walk with a long swagger and hold their heads high with dignity and aloofness; even when mounted atop a camel they hardly deign to incline their heads to a pedestrian. The veils promote this atmosphere of mystery and apartness, and the Tuareg whether in town or in his native desert has often been remarked upon for his penchant for appearing the master of all he surveys. That the cold, long look through a slit of cloth impresses the foreigner is indisputable and is used to this end, but it is

exactly when in the presence of the outsider with whom he is on familiar terms that the Tuareg is most relaxed in his veiling. This was most manifest when I encountered them in Nigeria, well outside of their proper territory. In these circumstances, they would frequently allow the veil to fall below the nose, but still covering the mouth, and others would occasionally allow their mouths to show. The first reaction of our little children to the veils was, of course, to pull them down, which provoked only indulgent laughter from the Tuareg. Despite the strictures on covering the mouth, it evidently mattered least when in our house and especially before little children, who, after all, hardly have social identities. Distance requirements were not so rigorously observed in our case because we were outside the social system, nor were those familiar with us attempting to impress us with the haughty bearing that they often assume toward the sedentary Sudanese populations. Besides, differences of custom and language were already so great that we could not intrude too closely upon their identities.

Many of those who were most lax in their veiling were members of the inferior vassal tribes or of the slave class. The slaves also go veiled, but through a kind of implicit sumptuary restriction on dress, they are much more slack about the position of the veil than are the Caucasoid nobles and vassals. Slaves commonly go about their work with their veils below their chins or at least across the chin. On other occasions, a slave may wear his veil under the nose but covering the mouth and, even when placed across the nose it generally rides well below the bridge. Vassals, as a rule, wear their veils much above the level of the slaves but do not take quite the care that the nobles do. The occasional vassal who affects the high and tight veil is usually attempting to improve his status.

Among all segments of the Tuareg population, the veil is worn higher when confronting a person of power and influence. The Tuareg do not prostrate themselves before a chief, as is the custom among their Hausa neighbors, but they do elevate their veils to the bridge of the nose. The person of higher status will usually keep his veil at a somewhat lower level, though its actual height depends much on the amount of deference due the other. On the other hand, veils may be worn at the level of the tip of the nose or below it by a companionable group of young men, especially when they are outside of camp precincts.

Variations in veiling usage are found not only at fixed positions within the status hierarchy but at relative ones such as in the dyadic relationships given within the kinship system. This is most clearly seen, and the distance setting usage of the veil best demonstrated, in affinal relationships. The Tuareg speak of proper decorum toward the parents of the wife and, to a lesser extent, the siblings of the latter as being based on the observation of both shame (*tekeraki*) and respect (*isimrarak*). A man shows this, among other ways, through avoidance of the name of his

father-in-law, which he generally accomplishes by calling him *amrar*, or 'leader,' in reference to the father-in-law's position as head of his own household, or through teknonymy. The latter usage is most commonly expressed by addressing the father-in-law as the father of one of his sons, as for example "aba 'n Ibrahim." The mother-in-law's name is also taboo, but the Tuareg generally refrains from addressing her by a title, inasmuch as he commonly does not have as much contact with her as he does with the wife's father. There is some tribal variation in the extension of these taboos to the siblings of the father-in-law and mother-in-law, but such avoidance pertains in most of the southeastern Tuareg tribes.

Conduct toward the senior affines is characterized by general restraint and self-effacement. During the courtship period, the Tuareg does not take food or drink when visiting in the house of the intended or possible bride, for commensality among the Tuareg, as among most peoples, symbolizes the closing of distance and the establishment of solidary bonds. This form of avoidance is maintained even after marriage, though the groom has more frequent occasion to contact his father-in-law on matters of business. Similarly, the bride observes greater avoidance of the father-in-law, but here there is a further normative component to the relationship, for the bride commonly will draw her shawl over her head and across the lower part of her face when in his presence. Thus the female has occasion to approximate the veiling practice when observing distance in a highly specific and intensive form. This, I might mention, is the nearest any Tuareg woman comes to the Near Eastern purdah, one aspect of which entails the veiling of the woman's face in compliance with Sura 4 of the Koran, which says of good women: "They guard their unseen parts because Allah has guarded them."

It is, then, all the more interesting to observe that the Tuareg men are most strict with their veils when in the presence of the father-in-law or the mother-in-law, for, in addition to other signs of respect and avoidance, the son-in-law is careful to adjust the veil so that only a very narrow aperture is left open, and the eyes are hooded and left in shadow. At this point, we are no longer dealing with an analytic statement of the relationship of veiling to social distance, but with a concrete, conscious motivation, for the Tuareg state that reserve and shame are the essence of conduct toward the senior affine and that they partially express this with the veil. Beyond the aspect of ceremonial avoidance, it would seem that there is another component closely related to this symbolism, that of maintenance of the dignity of the actor—by his symbolic withdrawal from the threatening situation vis-à-vis the superordinate, Ego is also furthering the maintenance of his self image. This is manifest in the fact that the veil is also worn high when courting, and very special care is given at the formalized courting sessions, or *ahals*. On the latter occasions, the young suitors conduct themselves with great dignity; the veils are

worn very high and close and a full retinue of retainers accompany the young men, if they are sufficiently wealthy. But avoidance, in the physical sense, could hardly be the function, either latent or manifest, of the veil at such times, for Tuareg courting frequently culminates in sexual activity. Rather, the young man attempts to communicate to the girl his own worth and standing and, concomitantly, through standing somewhat aloof, maintains his command over a rather critical situation in which the prognosis of success is never certain.

The above data suggest that there are two aspects of distance: the external dialogue and the internal dialogue; the actor maintaining the interaction situation and Ego maintaining ego. Perhaps this is best illustrated by the fact that the veil is not worn by men at two phases in the life cycle—when they have no status, as in the case of minors, and when they have too much status, as in the case of the *hajji*. The latter is the honorific term applied by most Moslems to persons who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca, and this status signifies that the occupant of it has gained religious merit and, with it, secular prestige. But beyond this the *hajji* is a person who has partaken of the sacred and by so doing has absorbed it as part of his identity. Among the southeastern Tuareg it is quite common for such men—and they are relatively few in number—to permanently divest themselves of the veil, for dignity and esteem are theirs by right. Moreover, a Pilgrim need show no shame or respect before others: his very status is adequate to guarantee him distance. It will be remembered, however, that even very powerful chiefs wear the veil, suggesting that there is a further quality to the divestment of the veil than that of sheer prestige. What then is this difference between the Pilgrim and the Chief? It is simply this: though the latter may have more power and influence than the former, the status of the chief is secular and that of the pilgrim is sacred. The symbolism of the veil, then, belongs to the realm of the sacred in social relations, and I would suggest that this is why the secular chief continues to wear it while the holder of the status of pilgrim does not. That the veil is best understood in terms of Durkheim's concept of the sacred and that its use conforms to ritual has already been suggested by the form and protocol surrounding it. I will develop this point further in the conclusion of this essay.

### *Social Structure and the Veil*

It would perhaps belabor the point to inquire further into the functions of the veil as a maker of symbolic distance, and I wish to turn to its structural setting. Granted the premise that the Tuareg veil is a distance setting device, why do the Tuareg need such a device? If distance is a component of all social relations and is essentially a part of sociation,

as was maintained at the outset of this article, then why do not all peoples wear veils? Granted that all humans present a facade of sorts to society, the proper question is why do the Tuareg go to such extremes? After all, these people *really* wear veils. To answer this question, we must return to the subject of Tuareg social structure and explore certain aspects of it in some detail, for the veil has been seen to be a part of the ritual apparatus of the society and must have a meaning within the social system itself.

It will be remembered that the Tuareg social units are preferentially endogamic, from the local groups settled about the wells to larger tribal aggregations, and that the boundaries of these groups are set by in-marriage and not by exogamy as is common in most societies having extended kin groupings. Among the Tuareg this yields a rather distinct spatial juxtaposition of role players. Almost every type of residence possibility is known among the Tuareg. Though couples are not normally neolocal, it is not unknown for a family to move to residence among a group in which they have no close kinsmen but where certain concrete advantages await them. Duolocality also occurs, at least among the Kel Oui tribes south of the Air massif, and the couple in the early years of their marriage resorts periodically to life with the families of both bride and groom. Most Tuareg, however, profess to a norm of patrilocality, though they admit freely that the alternative of matrilocal residence, especially in the initial phase of marriage, is also common. To summarize, despite the professed patrilocality, there is considerable variation in residence alternatives, and no local-political-kin group yields a uniform composition in terms of types of kin. It should, however, be reemphasized that the rule of endogamy does determine a majority of marriages—and to the extent that marriages are endogamic the above residence choices become an academic matter. A Tuareg may well state that he resides with his own kin, but further questions will reveal that his wife's relatives indeed reside in the same group. Under conditions of residence near the affines, however, it is common to observe avoidance through placing the hut at some distance from that of the wife's parents. In a humorous mood, one said to me: "We don't want them to hear the noises we make at night." Wherever they camp, the fact remains that life among one's consanguines is quite commonly life among the affines, and, further, they are the same people.

This takes us to a very real, and sometimes overlooked, aspect of most societies having unilineal descent: rules of group and local exogamy function primarily to define the boundaries between the conceptually antithetical, and complementary, principles of incorporation and alliance and the social groups based upon these principles. This segregation is impossible in a society such as Tuareg, for one's in-laws are at one

and the same time members of one's kin group. This situation is compounded by the fact that, despite the nominal matrilineality discussed above, the Tuareg actually reckon their ties of kinship bilaterally; in this way they differ from the Arab Bedouin who also practice kin and local group endogamy but suppress the resulting diffuseness of cross-cutting relationships through a formal ideology of patrilineality. Lacking such an ideology, the Tuareg recognize and trace ties through both lines and further insist upon regarding all members of local-political aggregations at whatever level as co-descendants from some common ancestor. This, combined with endogamy, results in a multitude of ties through which any two people in one of the iriwan groups can trace relationship in several ways. In most of the Tuareg groupings the shallowness of genealogies allows kin ties to remain diffuse and unspecified except with very close relatives, thus giving some protection from the possible role conflicts inherent in the cross-cutting ties. But these relationships remain ambivalent for this very reason, and bonds of incorporation and solidarity within the social units are charged also with the antithesis and opposition of affinity and alliance.

My thesis, then, is that given this ambiguity and ambivalence of relationships, this immanence of role conflict, the Tuareg veil functions to maintain a diffuse and generalized kind of distance between the actor and those who surround him socially and physically. By the symbolic removal of a portion of his identity from the interaction situation, the Tuareg is allowed to act in the presence of conflicting interests and uncertainty. The social distance set in some societies by joking and respect or avoidance behavior towards certain specific categories of relatives is accomplished here through the veil. It is, however, difficult to maintain specific differentiation of kin roles given their dual character, and the expression of distance is generalized in varying degree to all one's fellows. It is, therefore, for sound structural reasons that the Tuareg is most mindful of the attitude of his veil exactly when he is among his own.

That women do not wear veils is another manifestation of the very simple and universal fact that the differences between the sexes go beyond biology, a cause for wonder to those who, for example, point out that father's sister's child marriage is quite common in patrilineal societies (with asymmetrical cross-cousin marriage)—for women. The Tuareg woman is also placed in a situation of ambiguity vis-à-vis her kin, but, despite her rather high prestige in this society, she is not a public figure and does not operate in as wide a social context as does the man. The quality of her social relationships is not so instrumental as that of the man. It is repetitive to stress that kinship relations are political relations in a society of this kind, and the Tuareg woman is not a significant political actor in the formal sense.

### *Conclusions*

In this paper, I have taken the single item of the Tuareg veil, and through an analysis of its operation in the social system, I have attempted to say something general on the subject of social distance. I have argued, following Simmel, that social distance pervades all social relationships though it may be found in varying degrees in different relationships and in different societies. I take this as axiomatic, for inasmuch as social conduct implies limitations upon range of expectable behavior and closures upon other relations and behavior, the actor must insulate large portions of his social existence. This is done through withholding knowledge of his course and commitment in the action situation, and it is concretely accomplished through distance setting mechanisms—the privacy and withdrawal of the social person is a quality of life in society. That he withholds himself while communicating and communicates through removal is not a contradiction in terms but a quality of all social interaction.

Pursuing the well-established premise that distance is to be found most strongly in those relationships that are most difficult but which must be perpetuated, I have examined the custom of veiling among the Tuareg and have concluded that it functions to maintain a generalized distance. This is manifest in the specific use of the veil, as for example in association with senior affines, and we have seen that the more delicate of social interaction situations requires the greatest distance and removal of the actors. Further, the use of the veil has been interpreted as being ritualistic in nature, not only because of the protocol and punctiliousness surrounding its use but because it concerns itself with something “sacred.” The sense of the sacred is seen here in the sentiments of shame and pollution that surround the hidden region of the mouth and derives, I believe, from the very delicacy of Tuareg social relations, from the fact that maintenance of the social system is deeply connected with the maintenance of a high degree of social distance. Though this sacred quality is found suffused through all societies and all social action, and though all social *conduct* is in a sense ritual, certain characteristics of the Tuareg social order cause it to be more pronounced here. I found this quality to lie in some aspects of marriage, descent, and residence practices, one result of which is that there is no segregation of bonds of locality, affinity, and kin group membership. From this there proceeds an ambiguity of role complementarity that is partially resolved by the maintenance of diffuse distance towards all others. Beyond this, there is a complete overlap, both in the real situation and in the formal, jural sense, of ties of descent and the antithetical relations of alliance. While it would be incorrect to say that the Tuareg solves the potentiality of role conflict by



physical avoidance, he certainly promotes this resolution by distance. In so doing, two things are accomplished. First, the setting of distance in relations with a broad range of others removes the actor from the interaction situation sufficiently that he diminishes his commitment to a specific course of action. This allows for flexibility and viability in social situations that are not highly defined by the kinship system. Second, given the particularly threatening quality of the interaction situation, the actor is enabled to maintain autonomy and self-esteem. In a very real sense, he is in hiding.

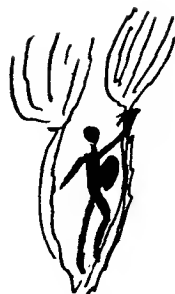
The above analysis is directed to the question raised earlier as to whether distance, in general, varies from one society to another, and, if so, what are the structural concomitants of this distance. Briefly, I find the answer to lie in the immanence of role conflict. I also queried the forms of symbolism that are involved in distance maintenance, and I deem this to be the more difficult problem. Though I do not wish to go into the psychological bases of the symbolism, I would call the attention of the reader to the fact that distance setting techniques are quite commonly associated with the eyes and the mouth. The extreme case of this is perhaps the masked ball, which, in its more earthy traditional form, allowed maximum latitude and freedom of behavior by totally effacing at least the area of the eyes. Other examples that come to mind from our own culture are the averted eyes of the Victorian maiden, who also was wont to demurely cover her mouth with a fan. That this is not simply a rather passé European trait was brought home to me when doing research in an Amazonian Indian group in which the definition of a wanton woman is one who looks directly at men and laughs openly without placing her hand over her mouth. In contemporary society such a means of defense and withdrawal is often achieved by wearing dark glasses. Sun glasses and tinted glasses are almost badges of office among West African emirs and Near Eastern potentates, and they have also become items of prestige in other parts of the world. They are commonly used in Latin America, where, indoors and out, heavily tinted glasses are the hallmark of the prestigious as well as those aspiring to status, for they bestow the aloofness and distance that has always been the prerogative of the high in these lands.

The literature of Freudian psychology gives extensive documentation to the female symbolism of the mouth, its vulnerability to penetration, and to the unconscious association between the eyes and the male generative powers; it is not surprising to find that it is these areas that are defended most often in social interaction. Beyond this, there are the areas of the body by which we most actively communicate with others and from which we emit the cues that guide those with whom we interact. But there is more to social distance than the simple symbolism involved in the non-use of the eye and mouth regions. It is well estab-

lished that distance of a kind can also be set by the use of humor and that there may be involved heavy and expressive use of the eyes and mouth for communication on these occasions. I would state that the single binding and unifying characteristic of all distance techniques is constancy of demeanor. This may take the form of a constant kind of behavior in a specific social situation, be it joking with one's cross-cousin, the showing of respect to one's father-in-law, or the even observance of business etiquette. The actor achieves a refuge by submergence in his social identity and, through uniformity of behavior, discloses the least of himself, while maintaining his social relationships.

The kind of social distance that is best known to us, be it under the rubric of joking, reserve, avoidance, or antipathy, is that which obtains between certain categories of role players and which is part of expected behavior in specific interaction settings. This I would term *role specific distance*, as opposed to the kind of diffuse social distance connected with the Tuareg veil. The latter I classify as *generalized distance*, for it is not only characteristic of a series of specific relationships but tends to pervade social interaction in its entirety. Often identified as a basic personality trait and attributed to ontogeny, it is seen here as a requirement of the social system as a whole. Role specific distance is manifested at certain nodal points in any social system, but generalized distance varies from one society to another depending upon the total configuration of the social system. It can be seen in the husband who treats his wife with the same polite consideration and affection which he accords to all ladies, and it can be seen in the Tuareg behind his veil. I will conclude by reminding the reader that it was a novelist, and not the social scientist, who told us that the uniform affability and the evenly distributed backslapping of the middle-class American were the loneliest of all gestures. But this aloneness is not the tragedy and dilemma of our place and time only, for alienation is the natural condition of social man.

## 23 The Principles of Clanship in Human Society



Paul Kirchhoff

SINCE IN THE OPINION OF THE EDITOR THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE CONTAINS A critical flaw, it is necessary to comment on this, its second inclusion in the Readings. The case is simple; few articles have had such a stimulating impact on the editor and he hopes that the excitement this piece generates in him will also be communicated to other readers. Now for that flaw.

Although Kirchhoff says he is talking about clanship, he is really talking about something much broader—corporate kin groups. It is true that some of these are clans, but others are better classified as lineages or kindreds. The definition of clan continues to vary among anthropologists. The editor has suggested elsewhere that it is useful to hold the definition of clan to social units comprised of unilineally related members who trace their relationship through stipulated descent, that is, through ties which they cannot always explain genealogically. This contrasts with demonstrated descent, which involves specification of all

SOURCE: Originally written in 1935, this important paper failed to reach publication until 1955, when it appeared in the *Davidson Journal of Anthropology*, which is produced by graduate students at the University of Washington. It is printed here with the permission of the author.

The author (b. 1900) is Professor of History at the National School of Sciences in Mexico City. Contributor of several fundamental concepts to the theory of social organization, Kirchhoff has spent most of the recent years in intensive studies of Mexican culture in pre-Hispanic times. An authority on the Toltec calendrical system, he spent an interlude of several years at the University of Washington making an analysis of Tibetan polity in the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. He has published for the most part in German and Spanish.

genealogical connecting links. Unilineal groups based on this principle are better termed lineages. Both kinds of groups can exist at the same time in the same society. However, there are societies in which one or the other predominates or is the sole kind of organization at the appropriate social level. This is said to be related to the divergent functions of stipulated and demonstrated descent. The former accords with easier access to the corporate holdings of the group; the latter tends to be associated with increasing use of the principle of economic scarcity and the narrowing of rights of access to basic resources.

The Kirchhoff essay lays the basis for understanding the previous generalization. It suggests some of the processes by which relative equalitarianism was replaced in some societies by increasing the significance of ranking and stratification (see II:28). As such, it contributes further to our understanding of the evolution of society.

# 1

If one were asked to single out one outstanding social phenomenon which dominates the early evolution of human society the answer would undoubtedly have to be that this phenomenon is the clan. Proof for this assertion will hardly be necessary. The decisive role of the clan in early human history manifests itself in a striking manner in the fact that its disappearance as the dominating form of social organization marks the end of a whole historical phase, and the beginning of another, i.e., that dominated by social classes and their struggles.

It would, of course, be incorrect to say that the history of human society begins only with the emergence of the clan. A very important chapter precedes this event. But while the beginning of this chapter of the evolution of human society is still characterized by the comparative shapelessness of all social forms, in its later part the subsequent emergence of the clan casts its shadow ahead as it were: here the main theme, and consequently the main problem confronting the student, are the various facts and forms leading towards the emergence of the clan.

One of the outstanding tasks before the student of early human society is, therefore, the study of the various forms the clan has taken in the course of its development, of the factors which brought the clan in its various forms into existence, and of the factors which led to its replacement, as the dominating form of social organization, by other forms.

The study of this complex of problems has dominated the first decades of anthropological research. Within the last two decades, however, it has almost completely receded into the background as a result of the present anti-evolutionist trend of anthropology.

The early evolutionist school in anthropology, with Morgan as its most gifted spokesman, fell into an error for which anthropology subse-

quently had to pay a heavy fine, i.e., the fine of experiencing the growth of anti-evolutionist tendencies, the unchecked growth of which today threatens anthropology with ever-increasing sterility. This error consists in replacing the concept of *multilineal* evolution, as applied by leading students to both natural history and the *later* phases of the history of society, by the concept of *unilineal* evolution, as far as *early* society is concerned. The application of this mistaken concept led to the distortion of many facts—and it may be said that anthropology since Morgan has to a very large extent lived on these distortions. It has become the fashionable pursuit of many a writer to demonstrate that the unilineal evolutionism of Morgan and others operated with distorted or misinterpreted facts, and that—therefore!—the facts unearthed by anthropology, both before, and even more so since Morgan, prove the inapplicability of the concept of evolution to primitive society—and therefore to society generally. All that has to be done, on the contrary, in order to demonstrate its applicability is to replace the unilineal concept of Morgan by the multilineal concept as applied in other sciences.

One of the tasks, therefore, which confronts us in studying the evolution of the clan and its role in the history of society is to inquire which different *forms of the clan* are found to exist, and what *their mutual genetic relation is*. The present paper is in the main confined to this task.

## 2

The most primitive stage of societal development known shows relatively small communities with a non-productive economy. The communities, several of which are united by bonds of common speech, customs and beliefs into what usually is called a tribe, apparently everywhere consist of a nucleus of near relatives (relatives both by blood and by marriage)—to which nucleus are frequently attached more distant relatives and unrelated individuals who for one reason or other have left their original community. Everywhere, however, the decisive element is the group of relatives, by blood and by marriage. Very frequently the community consists only of this group: a married couple and their unmarried and some of their married children—usually the married sons only, or the married daughters only, together with their husbands and wives and unmarried children.

This group, and the whole community, if larger than the kernel of relatives, is by no means a permanent unit. Ever again it splits up into smaller units of similar composition, be it at the death of the leading member of the community, as the result of the impossibility of the existence of a group above a certain size in one locality at this stage of economy and organization, or be it as the result of friction between mem-

bers of the group, e.g., between brothers or sisters. Marriage of a member of the community frequently leads to his settling apart. This lays the foundation for a new community which in the course of time will go through the same process as the original one.

No bond beyond that of sentiment ties the members of this community to the one in which they were born. What matters is where people live at a given moment: in other words, *the concept of descent is still completely absent.*

Relatives by blood and relatives by marriage are here, as to their place in the community, on a far more equal footing than at any subsequent stage of societal development.

The ties and obligations of kinship cut, of course, across several such communities, where there is intermarriage between several of them. But these ties and obligations do not themselves constitute communities. They do, therefore, not enter into our problem directly.

It is, on the other hand, only these ties of kinship which apparently everywhere at this stage regulate marriage. If we confine the term exogamy to the rule that marriage must be outside of a group larger than that composed of relatives in the first degree, and if we mean by group a constant body of people whose extent is the same for any of its members, then there is no such thing as exogamy to be found at this stage. Society here can still do without the concept of descent and consequently without the rule of exogamy.

The conditions described here are found mainly amongst mere food-gatherers and hunters, and may be said to be typical for them.

In certain cases, however, as, e.g., in many tribes in the Amazon area of South America, where the tilling of the soil has already replaced the mere hunting and collecting of food, and where the communities are considerably larger than, let us say, those of the Shoshoni or Apache, the concept of descent is nevertheless still unknown. Such cases undoubtedly present exceptions to the rule that mere foodgathering and hunting go together with the absence of groups based on the concept of descent. Lowie has quoted these South American cases as proof for his contention that there is "little evidence of complex laws of sequence." It would, however, seem to be very unsafe to base such a far-reaching contention on what so obviously are exceptional cases. Similarly futile it would be to arrive at general conclusions from the reverse cases of, e.g., many Australians or the tribes of the North American northwest coast where we find more advanced forms of kinship organization combined with lower forms of economy. These cases have to be explained on the individual merits of the case, and clearly understood as exceptions due to exceptional historical circumstances which in most cases we probably shall be able to demonstrate.

## 3

In the overwhelming majority of cases higher forms of economic activity are found together with higher forms of kinship organization.

The increasing cooperative character of economic activity requires forms of kinship organization which assure greater stability of the cooperating groups (which in primitive society predominantly means groups of relatives). Greater stability of the cooperating groups of relatives requires some principle which more clearly sets off one such group from the other, and which at the same time, assures their continuity in time.

The principle of clanship, based on the concept of descent, does both. In other words, the function of the clan is to assure stable and continuous cooperation. It takes a number of different forms, but its essence appears to be the same everywhere: to group together in one permanent unit all those persons, living or dead, who can claim common descent. This group is commonly called a clan or sib. Its invention, if we may call it that, is one of the greatest achievements of early man. It provided the form of social organization under which the forces of production could grow, slowly but steadily, to the comparative height attained, e.g., by the mountain tribes of Luzon, with their magnificent terraced fields and irrigation works, or, higher still, by Homeric society.

In this respect, however, and in the complexity and perfection attained by the developing forms of kinship organization themselves, there are important, even striking differences between some of the main forms which the principle of clanship took concretely. To anticipate one of the main results of our survey: some of these forms seem to lead comparatively early to the stage of stagnation, or into a blind alley if we may say so, while others seem to possess far greater possibilities of development.

At the present stage of the investigation of the problem, I conceive of these various forms of clans not as of consecutive stages, so that one could be explained as developing out of the other, but rather as stemming from the same root, i.e., from the more amorphous type of kinship organization outlined before. Whether they actually grew out of this common root *at the same time* is quite another question. In fact, it would seem that they, or at least some of them, rather represent *successive* branches off the same tree. In other words, while none can be explained out of the others, still some appear to be more archaic, others more recent. This concept is, of course, thus far but a working hypothesis, and may remain so for a good time, until a complete survey has been made of the known forms of kinship organization and the other cultural forms accompanying them in every specific case. The detailed evidence

on which these provisional conclusions are based can unfortunately not be given here for reasons of space. I hope to be able to present this evidence, in part at least, soon in a second article dealing with this question.

Out of the several forms of clans which have to be distinguished I shall here omit some, especially that found in most Australian tribes, and single out for discussion two only. It appears that the overwhelming majority of tribes whose social units are known to be based on descent, belong to one or the other of these two types.

#### 4

The first of these two types is that of *unilateral exogamous clans*, either of the patrilineal or matrilineal variety. Since these two varieties are alike in all other points except that one is matrilineal, the other patrilineal, no attention needs to be paid here to this difference, since our main aim is to show what distinguishes *both* of them from the other type of clan which is neither unilateral nor exogamous.

The formative features of the first type of clan, in both of its varieties, are: (1) The clan consists of people who are related to each other either through women only or through men only—according to the customs of the tribe; (2) every member of the clan is, as far as clan membership goes, on an absolutely equal footing with the rest: the nearness of relation to each other or to some ancestor being of no consequence for a person's place in the clan; (3) members of the clan may not marry each other.

In other words, the principles underlying this type of clan are: unilateral, "equalitarian," exogamous. They constitute one indivisible whole. It is no accident that practically everywhere where we find one of them we find the other two. Neither of them would, in fact, by itself, produce the same result.

These principles of clanship, or rather this threefold principle, leads to sharply defined, clearly separate units, comparable to so many blocks out of which society is built. There have to be always at least two such blocks—two clans living in connubium. Usually there are more than two.

The most striking aspect of this threefold principle of clanship is its extreme rigidity. It is hard to imagine in which direction this type of clan could develop further. The classical form in which we know it from hundreds of tribes seems to exhaust all its possibilities, and no forms leading beyond it seem to have been reported from anywhere—unless the Australian systems should fall into this category.

This type of clan makes possible a kind of economic and general cultural cooperation which in its way seems perfect. But, as the term perfect implies, it seems to be the highest type of cooperation which can



be achieved along *this* line of development. The growing forces of production at a certain stage demand important readjustments in the form of kinship organization of which this type appears to be incapable. Its absolute equalitarianism, combined with the complete subordination of each of its members to the interests of the clan as a whole, while making possible a certain type of primitive cooperation, obstructs very effectively the evolution of these tight forms of cooperation which are based upon economic and social differentiation. Where, therefore, with this type of clan higher forms of economy have come into existence, as, e.g., those based on animal breeding, the development of which requires higher forms of cooperation, there this new economy has usually not gone beyond rather meagre beginnings. It is, on the other hand, significant that the forms of irrigated agriculture found amongst so-called primitive tribes appear to be in the main confined to tribes with the second type of clan, the characteristics of which we will describe presently.

The first type of clan, the unilateral, equalitarian, exogamous clan, is, in the main, typical of tribes with migratory agriculture or with primitive forms of animal breeding. It is probably no accident that it is found above all in those parts of the world where cultural development seems to have reached a point of stagnation, except where subject to foreign stimuli, i.e., in the Americas, in large parts of Negro Africa, in Melanesia and New Guinea, etc.

The form of kinship organization which the unilateral-exogamous principle of clanship creates appears definitely as a blind alley, and more than that; at a certain stage of economic and general cultural evolution as an obstacle to further development. What constitutes its greatness at the same time constitutes its limits.

## 5

We are presented with a strikingly different picture the moment we turn to the second type of clan, found amongst the early Indo-European and Semitic tribes, amongst the Polynesians and most of the Indonesians, including the inhabitants of the Philippines, and a few tribes in other parts of the world. At whatever stage of development we find these tribes, we discover in their economic and social life, factors making for further development, everywhere in the direction of further economic and social differentiation.

What, then, is the type of clan found among these tribes? The answer to the question is not a simple one, at any rate, not if a simple designation like "unilateral," "exogamous," etc., is expected. In fact, the very names "clan," "Sippe," "gens," etc., while taken from the vocabulary of tribes having the *second* type of clan, have been for such a long time and so exclusively used for clans of the first, i.e., the unilateral-exoga-

mous type, that it is very difficult indeed to break down the confusion which anthropologists themselves have created. This confusion consists in the belief that the unilateral-exogamous clan is *the* clan, and that everything else, including the clan of the Gaels, the Sippe of Germans, and the gens of the Romans, is a deviation, or at any rate a special development, from the type of clan found among the Iroquois or in the Trobriand islands. If there is one question in which there is full continuity from Morgan to our own days, then it is this misconception.

Very few indeed are the anthropologists who have tried to understand the clans, e.g., of the Polynesians as a type in itself, as opposed to that, e.g., of the Melanesians. And there is hardly any modern anthropologist who has tried to re-evaluate the principles underlying the clans and sibs and gentes of the early Indo-European tribes. In fact, it has somehow become a habit to shun tribes which have this type of clan, both in library research and in field work. They do not fit into the accustomed pattern. Yes, it is precisely the study of these tribes which will allow us to bridge the still existing gulf between the facts of anthropology and those of early European history. These tribes are closer to our own past than any others, and if anthropology aims at being a "useful" science in the sense that its researches and findings fit into a larger body of scientific knowledge, then we must undoubtedly pay more attention to tribes the study of which promises to give us the key to the earliest written history of the Jews, the Greeks, the Romans, the Germans, etc. Thus far, anthropology has completely failed in this task which Morgan regarded as one of the main tasks of our science. In fact, there are probably very few anthropologists today who would agree that this is one of the main tasks of anthropology.

The decisive difference between the first and the second type of clan is that what matters in the one is relationship *through* either men or women (according to the customs of the tribe), irrespective of the nearness of such relationship to the other members of the group or to some ancestor—whereas, on the contrary, in the other type it is precisely the *nearness* of relationship to the common ancestor of the group which matters. The first of the two principles of clanship results in a group the members of which are of absolutely equal standing, as far as this standing is determined by membership in the group (leaving aside the question of age). The second principle results in a group in which every single member, except brothers or sisters, has a different standing: the concept of the *degree of relationship* leads to *different degrees of membership* in the clan. In other words, some are members to a higher degree than others.

The logical consequence of this state of affairs is that at a certain point it becomes doubtful whether a person is still to be regarded a member of a certain clan—a question that could never arise in a uni-

lateral-exogamous clan. Clan membership so-to-speak shades off the farther one is away from the center-line of the clan—the real core of the group. This core, the *aristoi*, consists of those who are the nearest descendants of the common ancestors of the clan.

In most tribes descent is customarily either through men or, more rarely, through women, but very frequently, especially in the case of the *aristoi*, descent may be counted through either of them. That side being chosen which gives a person a higher descent, i.e., a closer relationship with the ancestor of the group. The term “ambilateral” has been coined for this system.

Genealogies, unknown and unnecessary in a unilateral clan, are here the means of establishing the “line” of descent of the nobles—this “line” being another concept unknown in unilateral clans.

A corollary of the second principle of clanship is that there is no exogamy in the sense defined above. In fact, there could be none, since there are no groups with definite and fixed “boundaries.” On the contrary, we frequently find close endogamy—however, usually only for the *aristoi*. Marriage between relatives of high descent assures that their offspring will be of still higher descent.

The type of preferential marriage most characteristic for this type of clan is that with parallel relatives:—the brother's daughter and/or the father's brother's daughter. We find this marriage all the way from ancient Prussia, Greece, and Arabia, to the Kwakiutl of the North American northwest coast who together with the Nootka seem to be the only representatives of this type of clan organization on North American soil. Marriage with either the brother's daughter or the father's brother's daughter may almost be regarded as a “leitfossil” of this type of clan.

Another type of preferential marriage found frequently with it is marriage with a half-sister, i.e., a sister by the same father, but a different mother. Neither of these two types of preferential marriage seems to be ever found in societies organized into unilateral-exogamous clans.

The distinction between rules of behaviour for the noble core of the clan and for its outer membership runs through all societies organized into clans of the second type. It is the feature which most clearly and sharply sets off this type of clan from the “equalitarian” unilateral-exogamous clan, and it is this feature which lies at the root of the very different role which tribes organized into the one or the other type of clan have played in the history of mankind. In fact, this difference inevitably flows from the opposite principles which determine the structure of these two types of clans. The one divides the tribe into a number of solid blocks with clear cut boundary lines, each homogenous within. The other results in a type of society which may be likened to a cone, the whole tribe being one such cone, with the legendary ancestor at its

top,—but within it are a larger or smaller number of similar cones, the top of each coinciding with or being connected with the top of the whole cone. The bases of these cones, representing the circles of living members of the various clans at a given moment, overlap here and there.

The tribe as a whole has essentially the same structure as each of its component parts: it is, therefore, only a question of a choice of words whether we call both of them “tribe,” or both of them “clan,” or the larger one “tribe” and the smaller ones “clans.” Professor Boas’ presentation of Kwakiutl kinship organization illustrates this point.

Any one of these cones, large or small, can exist by itself. With the unilateral-exogamous type of clan, on the other hand, always at least two such clans must exist, and the body comprising two, or more, of them together does not have the structure of a clan.

In other words, the two types of clan differ in every single aspect, except the basic one, namely that they are *both based on the principle of descent* (though a different one).

## 6

In societies of the “conical” clan type, it is regarded as a matter of course that all leading economic, social, religious functions are reserved to those of highest descent, i.e., those closest to the ancestor of the clan and tribe, who frequently is regarded as a god. With the development of production and of culture as a whole, the role of these *aristoi* within the life of the clan and the tribe becomes ever more important. The nearer in descent to the godlike ancestor a person is, the greater are his chances in the process of ever-growing economic and social differentiation. Social differentiation, at this stage of evolution of society, the *condition sine qua non* of the development of higher forms of cooperation, not only finds no obstacle in this type of clan, but on the contrary an extremely flexible medium, namely a hierarchy of relatives, based on the principle of nearness of descent.

For a long period to come this principle of clanship is able to adapt itself to the ever-growing complexity of social relations. A survey of the tribes organized into clans of this type shows a whole scale of such adaptations to the increasing degree of social differentiation within the tribes: mainly along the line of a more marked stratification of the members of one and the same group. Thus, some members of the clan may be chiefs and near-gods, while others, at the opposite end of the scale, may be slaves: yet all of them are regarded as relatives, and in many cases, are able to prove it.

The process of differentiation within the clan, while for a long time taking place within this flexible unit, finally reaches the point where the interests of those of equal standing, in *all* the clans of the tribe, come

into such sharp conflicts with the interests of the other strata that their struggles, the struggle of by now fully-fledged social classes, overshadows the old principles of clanship and finally leads to the break-up of clan, first as the dominating form of social organization and then to its final disappearance. This point, the end of one phase of human history, and the beginning of another, has just been reached when the Greeks, the Romans and the Germans enter into the light of documented history.

However, none of the tribes with which anthropology usually deals have reached this stage. The highest stage found here is, on the contrary, one where it is still to the advantage of the *aristoi* to keep the clan organization intact because it still serves them as the best instrument in their struggle against the lower orders. The reason for this is not difficult to see. In clans of the unilateral-exogamous type the obligations and privileges of every clan member in the final account equal each other. Whatever benefits the individual benefits the clan as a whole, and reversely; whatever strengthens the clan strengthens every one of its members in an equal measure. In this lies the greatness, but at the same time, the limitation of this type of clan. In the cone-shaped clan, on the contrary, everything that strengthens the clan strengthens, above all, its core and correspondingly: whatever any member contributes to the welfare of the clan as a whole benefits above all, the *aristoi*.

Up to a certain point of economic and general cultural development, this strengthening of the core of the clan means, at the same time, a strengthening of the whole clan. But, in the course of time, this becomes less and less true. The interests of the *aristoi*, and to a lesser degree, those of the middle strata where these have come into existence, become ever more separate from and finally opposed to the interests of the group as a whole. But, the bonds of clanship still exist, and, again up to a certain point, it is to the advantage of the *aristoi* to utilize them against the other strata within the clan.

## 7

A most instructive example of this state of affairs is offered by the Igorot tribes of the northernmost of the Philippine Islands, Luzon. Amongst these tribes whose economy is based on terraced agriculture and irrigation, we are able to study certain still rather embryonic forms of struggle between the developing classes of landlords and landless. Both sides fight here completely within the confines of the old clan organization which is still fully intact. The struggle has certain outward forms of a religious character which, however, do not conceal from the observer the essentials of the struggle.

Both weddings and funerals necessitate amongst these tribes the sacrificial slaughtering of a pig by the nearest relative. The majority of

the population, however, have no pigs. If they still own a piece of land, they have to pawn it to a rich man in order to get the required pig. If they have already, at the previous occasion, lost their land, they have to work off the price of the pig. Thus the concentration of land in the hands of a few proceeds at a rapid pace.

The mechanism through which this process operates is the equality of the obligations, on the surface religious in character, for every member of the clan, be he rich or poor. The continuation of equal obligations unquestionably works to the advantage of some against others, at a moment when the development of the forces of production has already led to far-reaching economic and social differentiation. Now, the important point for our problem in all this lies in the fact that both contending sides are very frequently, possibly in the majority of cases, members of the same clan. In fact, they are under the mutual obligation of blood vengeance. But his obligation, too, under the conditions of economic inequality and of the peculiar ties of this type of clan system, works to the advantage of the *aristoi* who can, more or less, force the lesser members of the clan to come to their assistance, and thus, through composition fines extracted from the offender, are able continuously to increase their resources, which in turn gives them a still greater hold over their poorer clan fellows.

The role which this principle of clanship plays here, at a comparatively advanced stage of the evolution of economy and social relations, shows its extraordinary flexibility and adaptability. Its contrast to the rigid unilateral-exogamous principle of clanship is striking. However, this contrast should not induce us to overlook the fact that both of these principles of clanship and the form of clan to which they lead, belong essentially to the same phase of the evolution of society. If we compare them either with the stage of kinship organization which preceded it, or with the breakdown of kinship organization which followed it, the common features, which by grouping the living and the dead together into stable and permanent units, permit of higher forms of cooperation than those known before.

One of these, however, seems, through its rigidity, to lead into a blind alley, while the other, more flexible, has become the form within which social differentiation in a long course of evolution reached the point where it led to the formation of social classes and its own consequent destruction.

## 24 Types of Corporate Unilineal Descent Groups



Harumi Befu and  
Leonard Plotnicov

IN THE INTRODUCTION TO THE PREVIOUS SELECTION (11:23) WE ENCOUNTERED the editor's conception of clans and lineages, two types of corporate unilineal descent group. In this selection we are taken much more deeply into the subject.

Some readers may question why anthropologists have seemed to concentrate such inordinate attention on unilineal descent groups. Such a question would be well raised. As we see in the following selection (11:25), very significant groups, non-unilineal in character, were grossly neglected or totally ignored for a long time while the unilineal groups were the focus of attention. (Note how Kirchhoff in the previous selection confused unilineal and non-unilineal groups; this was due, at least in part, to the failure to see non-unilineal groups in the glare of attention given the unilineal organizations.)

Even when unilineal groups are viewed in a revised perspective

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*which takes other forms of organization into account, they are an extraordinarily prominent feature in a wide range of societies. Although under certain favorable circumstances their origin may have been associated with paleolithic modes of subsistence, it seems likely that they became a truly widespread and dominant form of social organization in conjunction with the spread of domesticated food sources. On the other hand, unilineal organization does not necessarily perish with the advent of more complex civilizations. Let us turn, then, to this review of problems in the structure of unilineal corporate descent groups. The reader, however, may wish to compare the conception of economics, politics, and religion offered here with that found in II:26.*

### *I. Introduction*

In the past few decades the study of unilineal descent groups, as structured groupings, has engaged the attention of most British social anthropologists, and in recent years American anthropologists have also been increasingly concerned with one or another aspect of this topic. The wealth and excellence of the information provided by ethnographers working in unilineal descent societies have made possible the construction of an ideal type: the unilineal descent group. Various authors have pointed out that automatic membership recruitment through one parent, structural differentiation into segments, corporate functions of the group, etc., are essential attributes of the unilineal descent group. Of course, this, as an ideal type, is a heuristic device—a means of accurate description leading to the development of meaningful hypotheses.

It is in this spirit that we propose to construct several types of unilineal descent groups by making finer and more rigorous distinctions in the structure and function of such groups and to demonstrate the utility of these constructions by advancing several hypotheses which can be derived from them. The argument presented here rests upon the assumption that the corporate functions of a unilineal descent group—economic, political, and religious—and the strength of its corporateness are determined by structural factors, namely, by the spatial arrangement (settlement pattern) and size of the group.

Roughly, our hypotheses are as follows: given a group whose members regard themselves as related by descent, the smallest segments will tend to emphasize economic activities, the median segments political activities, and the largest segments religious activities.

### *II. Corporation*

Before these hypotheses can be stated without ambiguity, some crucial concepts must be made explicit. One of these, the concept "cor-



poration," has been the concern of several prominent scholars, such as Berle and Means, Fortes, Fried, Maine, Smith, and Weber. Each of them has defined the concept differently, albeit slightly so. A survey of their definitions, however, reveals certain common structural elements, such as: a corporation is composed of a plurality of individuals; the life of the corporation is independent of its individual members; and, membership is limited to individuals of certain qualification. These elements are not peculiar to corporations but are shared by other types of social groups. Therefore we do not regard them as critically important in the concept of corporation, since almost any social group will, according to these criteria, manifest "corporateness."

The various conceptions of these authors contain, in addition to these structural features, certain functional attributes. An analysis of the varying concepts and a survey of the ethnographic data on corporate groups lead us to believe that there are, as we have indicated, three major types of activities in which such groups function: economic, political, and religious. It is these corporate functions that are the concern of this paper.

These three functions are analytic categories. Any concrete example of a corporate group may include one of these activities, or any combination of all three. The compounding of such functions will unduly complicate our analysis at this point. We shall, therefore, take up this problem in a later section (IV) of the paper. We may generally define these functions as follows: "economic," material satisfaction of human needs; "political," the ordering of human relations; and "religious," relations with the supernatural. The last includes expressive and integrative activities.

We feel that it is insufficient merely to characterize a group as "corporate," as has frequently been done in ethnographic reports. A corporate group should be characterized by reference to its functions—by referring to it as economically, politically, or religiously corporate. A group without important economic, political, or religious functions should be regarded, for heuristic purposes, as "noncorporate." We must also recognize that a corporate group may stress one of its functions more than others. It is our thesis that certain corporate functions and certain structural units of a unilineal descent group are related to the forms of settlement pattern and to the size of the group. The presentation of specific hypotheses which correlate given functions with given structural units will be our task in the rest of this paper. First, however, we must clearly define the corporate functions and the structural units.

#### ECONOMIC CORPORATION

We have identified economic activities as the material satisfaction of human needs—more simply put, these are the means of "making a living."

An economic corporation is characterized by its members' dependence for their daily subsistence on a property in which the corporation has certain rights—ownership, management, or use. The degree to which a unilineal descent group may be said to be economically corporate depends on the extent to which it possesses certain rights over property on which the daily livelihood of its members, or a great majority of them, depends.

Some descent groups are economically corporate if we consider their "property" as the exclusive right or obligation to perform certain services or tasks. Thus, Indian caste groups are covered by our definition, as are localized or itinerant blacksmiths of the African Sudan. The blacksmiths, moreover, are an example of a group in which a property is also a monopoly of certain skills or knowledge.

Property in primitive societies often consists of a portion of land for tilling or grazing, as in many parts of Africa; of hunting territories, as in Australia; of trapping and fishing grounds, as on the Northwest Coast. In Malabar the Nayar *taravad*, a segment of an exogamous matrilineage, whose members jointly held land and a house, is a specific example of an economic corporation.

By defining economic corporation in terms of a group's dependence on its property as its means of making a living, we are excluding, for example, small plots of land which may be irregularly used for the growing of luxury crops, such as tobacco, or land which has only religious significance. An example of the latter type comes from Lesu, where the clans own land from which their ancestors are supposed to have originated. Such land has little economic significance, and the possession of rights over it cannot be said to constitute an economic corporation.

The question of who owns, who manages, and who has the right to use certain properties has sometimes not been carefully stated. In the analysis of economic corporations these functions should be distinguished. For how strongly a given group is economically corporate depends on whether it performs one or more of these functions. For example, a group that manages and utilizes, as well as owns, its property may be said to be more strongly corporate, in an economic sense, than a group that merely owns or merely manages its property. Thus we may say that the Australian horde is economically more strongly corporate than the Nayar *taravad*. For the former owns and manages, as well as uses, its hunting territory, whereas the latter holds land only as a kind of benefice with a long-term "lease," and does not actually cultivate it, since the land is rented out to tenants. In calling the horde more strongly corporate economically than the *taravad*, we by no means imply that it is wealthier.

The ownership or management of property does not exclude political activities, for example, in the control of the group's members for the coordination of economic tasks and for the protection of the group's

property against outside incursions. The managers of the property of a Chinese clan, for instance, do not themselves till the land owned by the clan; they rent it out and oversee the tenants. In this and in many other ways the Chinese clan managers act as an administrative staff and hold authority over others.

#### POLITICAL CORPORATION

A corporation is "political" when its members are supposed to be bound by the decisions and sanctions made by its authoritative heads. This political function has two aspects: internal and external. Internally, a political corporation is characterized by an unequal distribution of command among its members, with authority usually vested in the adult male members, who act as the group's representatives in dealing with outsiders. In such a group all the members, or more likely all the adult male members, present themselves to outside groups as jurally equivalent. They are liable for the compensation of an injury to an outsider by a member of the group. Such practices as the distribution of bride-wealth and the inheritance of widows within the lineage group are also expressions of the lineage as a corporate aggregate.

What Leach has called a "local descent group," defined as a unilineal descent group which is corporate for the purpose of arranging a marriage belongs to the category of political corporation. Marriage arrangements involve an exercise of authority over members of the group, for example, in the transfer of their collective rights over their women. This is not to deny that there is an economic aspect to such activity, as in the collection and distribution of the bride-wealth. What Colson has called "matrilineal group (*mukowa*)" in the Plateau Tonga society is an instance of the political corporation:

A matrilineal group is a corporate body since it has a common legal personality *vis-à-vis* all other similarly organized bodies. Inheritance, succession, provision and sharing of bridewealth, vengeance—though to a very attenuated degree today . . . are functions of the group.

The interrelations of the economic and political aspects of corporate groups defined by descent often becomes salient when the problems of inheritance or succession arises, even if economic and political acts are at other times difficult to distinguish. In Busoga, to illustrate the point, land is owned individually. At the death of the owner, the elders of his lineage convene and decide the heir. It is clear that the exercise of such power is a political act and not an economic one. But the Soga lineage does not become an economic corporation merely because it has the authority to decide the heir of the land. Although its acts have economic consequences, its activities are essentially political. By contrast, the Soga domestic group, a segment of the lineage which includes the deceased

man and his family members, may be said to be more weakly corporate politically than the lineage to which it belongs. It is, however, a stronger corporate group, economically speaking, for it reaps the economic benefits. If the Soga domestic group is compared with domestic groups of other societies in which decisions of inheritance and succession do not involve the encroachment of an outside authority, then the former is in no sense either more weakly or strongly corporate in an economic sense than the latter, but is certainly more weakly corporate politically, for it enjoys less political autonomy.

We must not overlook the fact that corporate unilineal descent groups may be subject to the control of a wider political body. The extent of this depends on the nature of the total political structure of the society in which the group in question finds itself.

#### RELIGIOUS CORPORATION

This type of corporation exists when a group either maintains its order through supernatural sanctions or recognizes its solidarity through acts or performances which manifestly symbolize its unity.

The distinction between political and supernatural sanctions is analytically crucial precisely because these two types of sanctions may merge under certain circumstances in concrete cases. Political sanctions have to do with the group's vesting in some men the right to use force in order to control the activities of others. In a religious context, by contrast, "orders are given in the name of the impersonal norm, rather than in the name of a personal authority; and even the giving of a command constitutes obedience toward a norm . . ." One may protest that in primitive societies the ultimate source of the legitimate use of physical force is supernatural. It should be remembered that our distinction between political and religious sanctions is analytical, just as is our differentiation of political and economic functions. It is probably true that for all politically corporate unilineal descent groups the legitimacy behind the application of political force ultimately derives from such sources as the ancestors. However, it is one thing to leave the enforcement of sanctions entirely to supernatural powers. It is quite another thing for supernatural beings to delegate such powers to living individuals.

To be sure, there is a good deal of overlap between political and religious phenomena, as there is between economic and political activities, both in the actors involved and the actions performed. It is often difficult, empirically, to distinguish political sanctions from supernatural ones. This is not, however, impossible—at least in theory. For example, some African trials by ordeal require an individual to entrust his life to supernatural power. A man may be required to swim across a pool infested with crocodiles. If, by rejecting the trial, he would incur only supernatural penalties, then the activity is clearly of a religious sort. If,

however, rejection of the trial also entails a fine or physical punishment, then the activity is political.

Forde's discussion of the Yakō matriclan illustrates the involvement of both religious and political corporate functions. According to Forde, if the clan priests' "decisions are flouted, one of the men's associations is authorized by them to despoil the offender and his close kin." Thus the Yakō matriclan does have some political functions; but it is weak politically insofar as it must depend on another body for the application of its decisions involving physical punishment.

The Yakō matriclan, however, is clearly a religious corporation. Each clan is associated with a fertility spirit. The clan priests act on behalf of the members, who are "dependent" on the spirits for supernatural benefits, and by virtue of their monopoly over access to the fertility spirit, they retain powers of coercion.

They [the matriclan priests] can refuse an offender and his close matrikin all access to the shrine of his matriclan spirit. More drastic is a ceremonial declaration of the offence to the *yose* [fertility spirit] and a request that the beneficence of the spirit be withdrawn from the offender and if need be from his *lejima* [matriclan].

It is of interest to us that the matriclan members are spread over a wide territory and the matriclan as such has little economic importance. Supernatural sanctions can be exercised over individuals who are far apart; but given the primitive means of communication associated with societies emphasizing corporate kin groups, effective political sanctions (with the potential use of physical force) are limited by distance. Thus, political corporation tends to be more localized than religious corporation.

#### NONCORPORATION

Finally, a unilineal descent group which is not corporate economically, politically, or religiously, as defined above, may be considered noncorporate. Noncorporation is a residual category. It may be argued that all, or at least most, social groupings manifest some feeling of unity, a commonality, or *esprit de corps*. While recognizing this fact, we may use the term "noncorporate" primarily as a heuristic device by which to contrast corporate with other kinds of groups. The noncorporate group has no means of correcting transgressions against its norms through religious sanctions or other means. The Yap matrilineal clan serves as an example:

This [matrilineal clan] is a territorially diffuse unit without corporate organization, internal differentiation, or authority structure. The matrilineal clan requires exogamy, provides for hospitality and help in case of need, and sanctuary in case of war. *There is no way of enforcing these obligations beyond expressions of indignation* (italics ours).

It is possible that a group may stress all these functions, economic, political, and religious, as does the Nayar taravad; or it may be corporate in two of these functions only. The permutation of these three functions logically yields seven distinct types. These, and the non-corporate types, are shown in Table 1.

*Table 1* LOGICALLY POSSIBLE COMBINATIONS OF CORPORATE FUNCTIONS

<i>Types</i>	<i>Corporate Functions</i>			
	<i>Economic</i>	<i>Political</i>	<i>Religious</i>	<i>Noncorporate</i>
1	x	x	x	
2	x	x		
3	x		x	
4		x	x	
5	x			
6		x		
7			x	
8				x

The thesis presented here is that these eight types do not occur haphazardly but that some of them are correlated with certain structural units of the unilineal descent groups. We shall term these units "minimal," "local," and "dispersed." The minimal group tends to emphasize the economic function, the local group the political function, and the dispersed group the religious function. Before we elaborate this thesis, we must define the three structural units with some care.

### *III. Structural Units of Unilineal Descent Groups*

#### MINIMAL GROUP

The smallest kinship group of any corporate significance is probably the domestic unit. Sometimes this is referred to as the household, homestead, or residential unit. Murdock has shown that this group may be of many different structural kinds—nuclear, extended, polygamous, etc. With the unique exception of the Nayar taravad, residential groups always contain some members who are not unilineally related and whose relationship to others is either affinal or nonkin structured. Thus the residential group as a whole can never consist wholly of unilineally related members (Nayar excepted); however, the structurally unilineal elements can in theory be abstracted out from this group. The significance of such abstracting will depend on the society in question and the problem under consideration. In the cross-cultural analysis of unilineal descent groups we suggest that the minimal group, i.e., the unilineally related members of the domestic group, be taken as the basic unit. This

unilineal descent unit differs from the domestic group in the exclusion of affinals and others who, though co-resident, might be unrelated to the core members. The concept also differs from that of Fortes's "minimal lineage," which he defines as "the group comprising only the children of one man." Fortes's "minimal lineage" thus includes only one generation of patrilineally related individuals. Our minimal group includes as many generations as there are among the unilineally related members of a domestic group of either patrilineal or matrilineal groups. The minimal group in a patrilineal form thus corresponds precisely with Fortes's "effective minimal lineage."

#### LOCAL GROUP

A local group consists of unilineally related individuals living within a village (otherwise called "hamlet," "settlement," "community," etc.). This is the most inclusive unilineal descent group whose members are in geographical proximity to one another and which permits fairly regular contact between its members. The local group corresponds structurally with Leach's "local descent group." Leach, it will be recalled, limited his analysis of this group to the arrangement of marriages; we, however, shall consider the wider functional implications of this unit.

What Richards calls the "minor matrilineage," or *mvumu*, of the Mayombe will serve as an example. She defines it thus:

. . . a local group forming a village or section of a village . . . composed of a group of brothers and their sisters' sons, with sisters who marry elsewhere but contribute money obtained by their work to the *mvumu* funds.

A local group may be composed of several smaller units of the same type. Both the Yakö patriclan, consisting of several patrilineages, and the Tallensi patriclan, composed of two or more linked maximal lineages, are examples of local groups with several constituent units.

A local group may be either a lineage or a clan. In the literature on kinship the distinction between lineage and clan is based on whether descent can be demonstrated or is stipulated, and the distinction is generally regarded as of critical structural importance. What is significant for our purposes is not such a structural distinction per se, but whether the descent group is localized or dispersed. For, as we shall see, different types of corporate functions are primarily correlated with the factors of the size of the group and the localization or dispersion of its members. For example, among the Yakö, unilineal descent groups consist of both lineages and clans. These lineages and clans do manifest differences in corporate functions. For this reason the distinction between lineage and clan should be retained.

## DISPERSED GROUP

This consists of unilineally related individuals who are not all localized in any one area. It may, but need not, contain local groups. Here, as in the local group, we shall distinguish between dispersed lineages and dispersed clans.

The Nuer lineage and the matrilineal clan of the Plateau Tonga are examples of a dispersed lineage and clan, respectively.

IV. *Functional Types of Unilineal Descent Groups*

We are now ready to recapitulate our hypotheses and to indicate which corporate functions tend to be associated with which structural units and why.

## MINIMAL GROUP

If this group is corporate, the tendency will be for it to be economically corporate. It will be so, for example, if arable land is owned by an individual or a set of unilineally related persons of that group and if it is inherited unilineally in that unit. In practically all actual domestic units of this sort, some members do not belong to the minimal group, although they may have the right to benefit from the products of the property owned and managed by it. Among the matrilineal Pueblos, husbands farm their wives' lands and are fed from these crops. The Nayar minimal group (*taravad*), on the other hand, is at once both the domestic group and the minimal group. The *taravad* may be considered more strongly corporate, economically, than the Pueblo minimal group because it need not allow any outsiders to share in the products of its estates. An example of a weak economic corporation, at the level of the minimal group, is the matrilineal and matrilocal Garo, among whom the management of the estate is completely taken over by a husband who marries into the domestic group (under the *nokrom* system), while the estate itself is owned and inherited matrilineally in his wife's group.

The minimal group may have rights of usufruct over property owned by some other agent. Among the Ashanti it is the larger, local lineage, of which the minimal group is a part, that owns the land. The land-owning unit among the Plateau Tonga is the territorially organized village. To the extent that these minimal groups are economically dependent on other agents, they are less strongly corporate economically than those which are economically independent. For any type of corporate activity, whether economic, political, or religious, we must know the degree to which the corporate group, whether minimal, local, or dispersed, acts autonomously or is, on the other hand, subject to a more inclusive structure. For example, with respect to economic corporation,



we must know which economic functions—ownership, management, or use—are assumed by other agents, e.g., a husband in a matrilineal descent group. Or, with respect to political corporation, we must know the degree to which juridical functions are assumed by other bodies, such as a village, tribe, state, etc. This, however, is an empirical problem beyond the scope of this paper.

The political corporateness of this minimal group may be judged by the extent to which authority over its members is vested in offices or persons of that group. The Mayombe offer an example of a politically weak minimal group. In the domestic unit, the father has practically no authority over the children and the mother has only limited authority. The right and responsibility to discipline the children are vested in the mother's brother, who is not a member of that domestic group but of a local group. Compare this with the patrilineal Tallensi. Fortes reports that among the Tallensi the father has "the right to inflict corporal punishment on them [the children]. In the old days he could, in theory, sell them into slavery if he wished." The Talle minimal group, when compared with that of the Mayombe, is stronger corporately in the political sense because it has greater autonomy for political action. That is, the Mayombe minimal group has some of its political power (*vis-à-vis* its own members) delegated to a more inclusive unit.

The above examples illustrate general tendencies. In patrilineal societies, the minimal group tends to retain a fair degree of political corporateness. Most minimal groups in societies with matrilineal descent, on the other hand, tend to be politically weak. As we noted for the Mayombe, this weakness is partly due to the fact that its members are to some extent under the control of an outside agent—often the mother's brother—who acts on behalf of the larger descent group, such as the local group, with which the minimal group is affiliated.

The minimal group may be considered religiously corporate if, for example, supernatural sanctions or taboos are specifically applicable to its members or if it expresses solidarity through some rituals, such as the propitiation of its own ancestors. The Nayar taravad is religiously corporate in this latter sense.

To judge from ethnographic reports of numerous unilineal societies, it seems that the minimal group tends not to be religiously corporate, the religious functions being ordinarily reserved for wider kinship units. The reasons for this tendency may possibly be related to the intimacy of the minimal group, in which, in the process of day-to-day living, the emotional ties between the members override such frictions as may arise. Perhaps because of that binding force or because of the strength of the idea that their relationship cannot be easily ended, there is not so much need of conventional symbols or acts or solidarity within the minimal group. Solidarity is more likely to be expressed—in rituals and

ceremonies—when the unilineal descent group includes, as does the local or dispersed group, many individuals who are not in such intimate association and among whom the emotional ties are not so binding.

#### LOCAL GROUP

It is this group which, because of its physical size and the close proximity of its members, we hypothesize, will tend to emphasize political actions. A minimal group is too small to afford its members protection at the level of social organization which produces strong and active unilineal descent groups. On the other hand, given the level of communications associated with “segmentary” societies, a group whose members are dispersed cannot be so readily mobilized as a group whose members live in close proximity. Other factors being equal, a localized group with fewer members can be coordinated politically and mobilized with greater ease than a larger group whose members are dispersed. It is, therefore, as we have suggested, the local group which affords the optimum conditions for effective mobilization of large numbers of people at the level of societies under consideration.<sup>1</sup>

It is to the local group that ethnographers most often refer when they speak of the “unity” or the “solidarity” of the lineage. What is sometimes called a “strongly corporate lineage” is frequently a local lineage which owns the land cultivated by its members and their spouses. These are examples of economically corporate local lineages, as illustrated in the Ashanti lineage segment.

As we indicated earlier, it is necessary to view any group in its wider economic, political, and religious settings. The minimal group will be less strongly corporate economically if the property on which its members depend for their livelihood is owned by the local group; but the descent group as a whole may remain strongly corporate economically. However, if the property is owned by a village, for example, composed of a number of unrelated local groups who have their rights of usufruct allocated to them by authority of the village, that will militate against the economic corporateness of the individual descent groups, as among the Plateau Tonga.

Probably the local group is politically corporate as often as it is economically corporate. If it is economically corporate, e.g., by reason of owning or managing farm land, it must permit the minimal groups, which compose it, access to these resources. The management and use of property thus involves a chain of authority at the local level. These economic allocations necessarily entail political activities.

<sup>1</sup> There are, of course, examples of unilineal descent societies, e.g., the Arabs and Mongols, that have been able to mobilize thousands during military campaigns, but we must remember that the use of horses rendered their communications systems exceptionally effective.

An example of a local group which does not own property, yet performs political functions, is the Yao matrilineage:

If he [a lineage mate] is called upon to pay a heavy fine it will be the members of his own matrilineage who will club together to find sufficient money. They, more than others, support him in his quarrels.

We could not, however, consider the Yao matrilineage strong politically. Mitchell informs us that the duty of the head of the matrilineage is to hold the group together. But the uxorilocal rule of residence prevents him from being with his lineage mates. Consequently the matrilineage is frequently broken into smaller segments.

A given unilineal descent group may have two or more levels of local groupings, each with different corporate functions. The Ashanti are a case in point. The larger, maximal lineage is politically corporate, recognizing a male head, who is often one of the chief's councillors; and it is also religiously corporate, since it has lineage gods to be propitiated and worshiped. The smaller, lineage segment is corporate economically, owning land and other economically useful property, and is politically corporate in so far as the jural authority of the mother's brother is effective and as he represents the group in external matters.

There are groups in which the localized units are clans and lineages, rather than lineages of varying scope. These clans and lineages may share political functions. The lineage group, however, may also have important economic concerns while the clans will be concerned with religious activities. For example, among the Yakö, the patriclan, with a priest as its recognized ritual head, is primarily a religious corporation with some political functions. Its constituent patrilineages are predominantly politically corporate, with their representative heads assisting the patriclan priest in political affairs, such as peace-making, and also economically corporate, with their collective rights to gardening plots.

The Ashanti and Yakö present parallel cases. In both groups the political function is shared at the local level by the constituent and more inclusive descent groups. In both, the smaller constituent groups also have important economic activities but not religious ones, while the larger, inclusive units have religious functions but not economic ones. These examples illustrate the general tendencies: where two levels of local groups share political functions, the smaller constituent units emphasize economic activities while the larger, more encompassing bodies stress religious functions.

#### DISPERSED GROUP

The solidarity of any kinship-based group is considerably weakened when its members are widely dispersed and as the size of the group in-

creases. It is extremely difficult for such a unit to be economically corporate, if it ever is. Under primitive economic conditions, the members of an economically corporate group must be in direct contact with their resources. That is why such groups tend to be minimal or local. Similarly, the control of mobilization of lineage members becomes increasingly difficult to the extent that they do not live together. The exercise of authority can still be maintained so long as the members live close enough for those in control to communicate their authority effectively, whether it be through the use of physical force or through economic deprivation. Therefore, the degree to which a unilineal descent group is politically corporate is inversely correlated with the extent to which its members are dispersed. The Tonga matrilineal group cited above may be considered a weak political corporation. It lacks any strong authority structure and it acts mainly in marriage arrangements, vengeance, etc., which require only an occasional and limited exercise of internal political controls. These are reflections of the high geographical mobility and dispersed settlement pattern of the lineage members.

Durkheim long ago pointed out how a group maintains its *esprit de corps* through the sharing of rituals and symbols. We may wonder why a dispersed group, such as a clan, may want to express its solidarity. Perhaps this feeling of commonality, or "we as against they," has its consequences in such matters as trade, travel, hospitality, etc. In this paper we have only attempted to show why a dispersed unilineal descent group would have difficulty being economically or politically corporate. It is suggested that if a dispersed group shows solidarity—for whatever reasons—it tends to be limited to ritual or religious activities.

Most of the dispersed clans which have totemic or exogamous taboos probably belong in this category; offenders are believed to incur supernatural punishment. Dispersed groups may also be noncorporate if there are no supernatural sanctions or other means of inhibiting or punishing transgressions of its norms. However, ethnographic reports on the application of supernatural sanctions to transgression of these taboos or norms are frequently lacking. The breaking of a clan's exogamous taboo, for example, may be regarded as religiously wrong and as a crime against the ancestors, and yet no punishment is expected. In such circumstances we cannot consider that this clan is religiously corporate; rather, it is a "non-corporate" dispersed group. As Schneider points out for the Yap islanders, it is important to distinguish between "the problem of why an act is deemed wrong" and "the question of what is done about it."

The hypotheses we have offered are summarized schematically in Table 2, in which "x" indicates a high probability of occurrence, "(x)" a low probability but logical possibility, and the blank space a lack of correlation.

### V. Discussion and Summary

Although anthropological literature abounds in discussions of corporate unilineal descent groups, the ethnographic reports sometimes do not describe these groups in cross-culturally meaningful terms, nor do they distinguish between different corporate functions. For example, members of the Summer Seminar of the Social Science Research Council contrasted what they called a "strong" matrilineal system of the Nayar with the "weak" system of the Navaho without using such analytic tools as are suggested in this paper. It is not enough to say that the unilineal descent group of a given society is or is not corporate. One must always specify which structural unit of the descent group is corporate and in what functional sense.

Our examples from ethnographic reports have shown that descent groups at different levels of inclusiveness are corporate for different functions and in different degrees. Specifically, we have offered the thesis that the different kinds of corporate functions are related to the size of the group and its settlement pattern. There has been no attempt to make any extensive survey of unilineal descent groups. The hypotheses offered here were logically derived from the conditions existing in groups known to the authors.

Table 2 OCCURRENCE OF TYPES OF CORPORATE UNILINEAL DESCENT GROUPS \*

	<i>Economic</i>	<i>Political</i>	<i>Religious</i>	<i>Noncorporate</i>
<i>Descent Groups</i>	<i>Ownership, management, and use of resources</i>	<i>Authority structure and representation</i>	<i>Supernatural sanction and ritual solidarity</i>	
Minimal	x	(x)		
Local				
Lineage	x	x	(x)	
Clan		(x)	x	
Dispersed				
Lineage		(x)	x	
Clan			x	x

\* x, frequent; (x), infrequent but possible; blank space, lack of correlation.

Three major corporate functions of unilineal descent groups have been analytically distinguished: economic, political, and religious. Three major structural units of unilineal groups have also been differentiated: minimal, local, and dispersed. We have offered a number of correlations between the structural units and the predominant corporate functions;

these are summarized in Table 2. These correlations should not be interpreted to mean invariable associations; they are merely hypotheses of general tendencies. In any empirical situation it is of course necessary to consider the total economic, political, and religious setting in which the unilineal descent group occurs.

Although we have limited ourselves in this paper to applying the concept of "corporation" to unilineal descent groups, we suggest that a similar application may be made with respect to groups other than those recognizing unilineal descent, such as nonunilineal descent groups which are said to be corporate.

# 25 Theoretical Problems in the Concept of Kindred<sup>1</sup>



William E. Mitchell

THE ALTERNATIVE TO UNILINEAL KIN GROUPING IS SOMETHING FAR LESS *clear-cut*. *Matrilineality and patrilineality are unambiguous by definition; such is certainly not the case with the congeries of possibilities included under the rubric of non-unilineality. There is, for example, simple bilat-*

<sup>1</sup> This paper is the result of some of the conceptual problems that developed in the study of kinship relations among New York City Jews of Eastern European origin or descent in the project "Studies in Family Interaction" sponsored by the Jewish Family Service of New York and the Russell Sage Foundation.

I am especially grateful to Dr. Hope J. Leichter, Director of the project, for her encouragement in the preparation of this paper and for the hours of stimulating discussion on the many aspects of kinship from which most of the ideas in this paper have arisen. Mrs. Joanne Burnett and Mrs. Judith Lieb of the project staff were helpful in preparing the final draft. I am also indebted to Profs. Conrad Arensberg, Harold Conklin, Morton Fried (and the members of his 1959 fall seminar in social structure at Columbia University), May Ebihara Gelfand, and Roger Peranio who read and commented on an earlier draft. But the responsibility for the interpretive position of this paper rests solely with the author.

Prof. J. D. Freeman and I exchanged early drafts of our independently prepared papers on the kindred and, although I have benefited from his analysis, our interpretations and conclusions remain essentially different.

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eralism, the inclusion of all relatives on both paternal and maternal sides. Obviously, for any society other than a small endogamous one, it would be impossible to continue to maintain groups so widely recruited. What happens, then, is that principles come into action inhibiting pure bilateralism, paring down the group to manageable size. There are various possibilities, including opportunistic selections made at various points in a life cycle, the taking or rejection of options which thereby create or eliminate the future options of offspring, or the fixed parceling out of memberships, perhaps in alternate ways to the two sexes. Such is the variety of possibilities of claiming membership in a bilateral kin group that until very recently most anthropologists believed that such a group could not be corporate, indeed believed that it could not function in ways equivalent to the functioning of a unilineal group. Now we know otherwise and the article that follows tells why.

One of the most important of the current problems in the study of kinship phenomena is the description and analysis of kinship in societies without unilineal descent groups. Pending a more detailed understanding of their structural and functional variations, these kinship systems provisionally have been termed "bilateral" or "cognatic." They also have been recognized to exist on all levels of socio-economic complexity ranging from the hunting and gathering band to the industrialized state. The principle concept historically associated with the study of bilateral or cognatic kinship systems is the *kindred*. It is sometimes referred to as the *bilateral kindred* or as the *personal kindred*.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the assumption that the kindred is an especially compatible structural feature of cognatic kinship systems. The initial part of the inquiry will focus on the work of Murdock since he is a major exponent of this position. Murdock, after examining the kinship structure of 250 societies as recorded in the cross-cultural files of the Institute of Human Relations at Yale University and from his own extensive library research, concludes that:

Specific descriptions or clear inferences attest the presence of kindreds in 33 societies in our sample, though further research would doubtless reveal them in others. Kindreds are occasionally reported for patrilineal societies, such as the Bena, Ojibwa, and Tikopia, and for matrilineal tribes, such as the Hopi, Iroquois, and Nayar, but the overwhelming majority are recorded for bilateral societies or for tribes with non-exogamous sibs or lineages, like the Fox and Tswana. They appear especially common with bilocal residence, though they also occur frequently with neolocal residence. In general, they are clearly associated with an absence of, or a minimal stress upon, unilinear descent. Probably they will ultimately appear to be characteristic of most bilateral societies.

This point of view remains unchanged in Murdock's recent remarks on the kindred. A related assumption has been made by Davenport: "Concerning bilateral descent and resulting personal and stem kindreds, only



the obvious is clear—this type of structure occurs where collective and corporate control is absent or minimal.”

This paper will attempt to demonstrate that these assumptions about the specific kinds of societies in which the kindred can be present are misleading and have obscured our cross-cultural understanding of kinship structure. In fact, from the way the kindred is presently defined, our position is not that “they will ultimately appear to be characteristic of most bilateral societies” but that they are characteristic, even today, of *all* societies.

In Murdock’s theoretical discussion of the kindred, the following definition is provided:

It is always Ego-oriented, i.e., composed of persons related to a particular individual (or group of siblings) bilaterally (literally “on both sides”). The members of a kindred, other than the core individual and his siblings, need not be, and frequently are not, related to one another. In any society, kindreds necessarily overlap one another endlessly. They are not discrete units; a society can never be divided into separate kindreds as it can be segmented into discrete families, lineages, clans or communities.

He adds that a kindred cannot be a descent group or a corporate group. Other definitions of the kindred essentially agree with Murdock’s. In summary, there is general consensus on the following characteristics of a kindred: (1) it is defined by reference to Ego; (2) it is the same in composition only for siblings; (3) it is not a corporate group; (4) it has no leader or headman; (5) its boundaries are relatively undefined and shifting; and (6) it is not a descent group.

One of the complicating factors in the analysis of the concept of kindred is that many anthropologists do not explicitly indicate that their use of the term refers to a kin unit with the above characteristics. In these usages kindred is apparently simply a term equivalent to “relatives,” “kinsmen,” “kinsfolk” and “kin” and can be used interchangeably with them. This terminological confusion is compounded by Radcliffe-Brown’s use of “sib,” not “kindred,” to refer to an individual’s network of kin in his discussion of Anglo-Saxon kinship while Lowie, of course, uses “sib” to refer to “a *unilateral* kinship group.”

The comparatively rare definition of the kindred in *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* (1929) as “a group of persons who acknowledge their descent, genealogically or by adoption, from one family, whether through their fathers or mothers” will not be considered here. Goodenough has demonstrated that such a grouping of kin is more accurately referred to as a “nonunilinear descent group” and more recently the terms “sept,” “ramage” and “ambilineage” have been proposed as variant types of nonunilinear descent groups.

The most salient part of Murdock’s definition of the kindred is its reference to an *individual’s* maternal and paternal relatives or, stated more

precisely, to an Ego-oriented network of parental kin. This is clear enough, but there would seem to be no logical reason to assume further, as Murdock does, that such a network of kin would be more structurally compatible with a cognatic kinship system than with a kinship system characterized by the presence of unilineal descent groups. Such kin networks instead would appear to be universally applicable to all individuals in all societies.

Certainly this is not a new idea. Morgan, in his pioneering cross-cultural study of kinship nomenclature systems, writes:

Around every person there is a circle or group of kindred of which such person is the centre, the *Ego*, from whom the degree of the relationship is reckoned, and to whom the relationship itself returns. Above him are his father and his mother and their ascendants, below him are his children and their descendants; while upon either side are his brothers and sisters and their descendants, and the brothers and sisters of his father and of his mother and their descendants, as well as a much greater number of collateral relatives descended from common ancestors still more remote. To him they are nearer in degree than other individuals of the nation at large.

And other anthropologists have repeatedly observed that regardless of the presence of unilineally organized descent groups in a society, Ego, in terms of kinship rights and duties, is filiated bilaterally with both maternal and paternal kin. Since this is a thoroughly documented point, it seems curious, given Murdock's definition of the kindred, that he believes it to be a type of kinship structure that is especially characteristic of societies *without* unilineal descent groups.

One wonders if Murdock, perhaps, is using "bilateral kindred" to indicate a network of kin to which Ego, in terms of rights and obligations, is *equally* filiated with paternal and maternal kin. If this were so then the kindred, so defined, would indeed seem to be a structural feature of cognatic kinship systems since the presence of a unilineal descent group in a society would undoubtedly skew Ego's kinship obligations unilaterally.

This would resolve the dilemma if it were not that Murdock has repeatedly noted that *some* societies with unilineal descent groups also have kindreds. For example, the Nuer and Tikopia are two of a number of cases of this type. Even then we might still reason that if the descent group were weakly structured it would not markedly skew Ego's kinship obligations to one side of his parental kin. This is not, however, the circumstance in either Nuer or Tikopia.

A last hypothesis comes to mind. Does Murdock recognize the kindred as a social unit among, for example, the patrilineal Tikopia and Nuer because their ethnographers have cited in monographs a native linguistic category that includes Ego's maternal and paternal kin, viz., the Tikopian *kano a paito* and the Nuer *mar*. If true, this might help to ex-

plain the peculiarly spotty ethnographic distribution of the kindred since in some instances its sociological presence would be determined by the ethnographer's recording of a native term for parental kin.

But this also raises a serious methodological problem, i.e., whether the sociological existence of the kindred in different societies is assumed in some instances from an anthropologist's constructs of social behavior while in others the criterion employed is a native linguistic category. Lévy-Strauss has discussed this problem in another context and concludes that, although native or "culturally produced models" of social structure are significant data, they are frequently of a different order from those abstracted by the anthropologist. Furthermore, unlike native categories of thought, the order of social reality that the anthropologist seeks in his formulation of structural models must also meet the requirements of a precise methodology.

Unfortunately, Murdock does not disclose the one or several operational criteria that he employs to deduce or assume the presence of the kindred in a society from among the diverse ways of reporting social structure in the ethnographic literature.

Regardless of these methodological problems in Murdock's plotting of the world ethnographic distribution of the kindred, there is another aspect of the concept of kindred with which we may come to grips, i.e., the structural implications of studying kinship from an Ego point of view. Traditionally and logically there are two main approaches to the study of kinship behavior: (1) the study of organized or corporate kin groups; and (2) the study of kinship ties from the social perspective of Ego. Where the first approach examines the organization and interrelationships of corporate kin groups, e.g. the extended family, lineage, and clan, the second examines the nature and extent of Ego's relationships with kin. These two types of system-references, viz. the corporate kin group and the kin ties of Ego, are complementary—not competing—approaches to the analysis of kinship phenomena. However this crucial and analytical distinction is not always acknowledged by field workers. This is especially true for studies of cognatic kinship systems where, in the absence of large corporate kin groups, the analysis often emphasizes the study of kinship from the social position of Ego. The regrettable consequence for world ethnology is that the kindred is more frequently recognized as a structural feature of cognatic kinship systems, thus aiding the possibility of a false statistical correlation.

In addition, anthropologists sometimes have not been aware that models derived from the study of Ego's kinship relations and those derived from the study of corporate kin groups refer to different orders of social relationships. Therefore they cannot be discussed as mutually exclusive structural variations abstracted from the *same* order of social relations. For example, Davenport in considering the important problem

of "framing hypotheses about the evolution of the different kinds of ascription through kinship" asks the following question: "The first question that arises is, what conditions favor the descent group as opposed to the personal kindred? That is, under what circumstances are bilateral and nonbilateral (unilinear and multilinear) descent most likely to occur?"

Davenport's implicit assumption is that the kindred correlates with "bilateral" descent and the descent group with nonbilateral descent and that kindreds and descent groups are mutually exclusive in the context of any one society. The theoretical position taken in this paper would rephrase Davenport's query as "What conditions favor the presence or absence of descent groups in different societies?" The question thus stated avoids the conceptual confusion that results when kinship structures abstracted from different orders of social relationships are erroneously perceived as structural variations on the same order.

There are, however, deep historical roots for the idea that the kindred and descent group are mutually exclusive types of social structure within a single society. An examination of them may also help us to understand why Murdock has assumed that the kindred is a structure that, statistically speaking, is more characteristic of cognatic kinship systems than unilineal ones. It is possible to trace this usage of kindred from Murdock back through Rivers, Phillpotts, and Pollock and Maitland by documenting their direct serial influence on each other.

The English jurists Pollock and Maitland were primarily concerned with the legal institutions of Anglo-Saxon society, and kinship was frequently an important factor in their inquiry. In their reconstruction of Anglo-Saxon society from historical documents, they observed that clans as permanent units where "kinship is traced only through males or only through females" were not in evidence. They did, however, recognize the social importance of the "blood-feud group" comprised of Ego's "spear and spindle kin," i.e., Ego's paternal and maternal relatives.

A number of years later the English historian Bertha Phillpotts, also a student of Anglo-Saxon society, acknowledged her indebtedness to the Pollock and Maitland study and made a similar but more explicit distinction between kindred and clan as mutually exclusive kinship structures:

"Clan" may fitly be used to describe large groups of kindred organized on an agnatic basis, such as we find in Dithmarschen. A clan system, however, is impossible where kinship is reckoned through both parents, as among the overwhelming majority of the Teutonic races in historical times. Here, to use Maitland's words, each individual (or rather each group of brothers and sisters) is himself the trunk of an *arbor consanguinitatis*, and it is this fluctuating group which we would designate by the word "kindred." It is a *wechselnde Sippe* rather than gens, for it can have no name, no permanent organization and no chief.

The conceptual versatility of the kindred may also be observed in this single quotation from Phillpotts. It is used once as a synonym for kin in describing clans and again as specifically referring to an Ego-oriented network of kin. But Phillpotts, in her attempt "to discover how long the solidarity of the kindred survived as a social factor of importance in the various Teutonic countries," does not focus her analysis on Ego's "*arbor consanguinitatis*," i.e., Ego's ties with cognatic kin, to its fullest extent. She examines only a segment of this kin network as some of Ego's kin fulfill a *specific* kind of kinship obligation. Her analysis of the structure of the kindred is essentially the analysis of the structure of the "blood-feud" groups as recorded in historical legal documents. She therefore is not dealing with the structure of the kindred in its broadest sense, but with a single structural feature. Phillpotts seems unaware that her focus is limited. Vinogradoff has recognized this limitation of historical documents in his discussion of the Anglo-Saxon kindred, noting that such "ancient evidence" often "leaves us in the dark as to every day occurrences, which are supposed to be known to everybody and therefore do not need to be recorded."

So the primary source of data for Phillpotts is documents recording a dispute between two individuals that cite their respective kin who, for example, took an oath of compurgation, payed or received weregeld, or signed a treaty. It is also interesting that although Phillpotts formally defined the kindred as limited to Ego's paternal and maternal cognates, in her discussion of actual cases she cites Ego's affines as significant participants including not only Ego's spouse's kin but the spouses of his cognates as well.

It is Rivers, however, who introduced the concept of kindred into the mainstream of anthropological kinship theory as a special type of kinship structure and to whose usage contemporary anthropologists most frequently refer. In an attempt to conceptualize more clearly "the groups usually included under the heading of the family," Rivers distinguished among: "(i) the small group of parents and children; (ii) the bilateral group, consisting of persons related through both father and mother; (iii) the unilateral group of persons related through the father only; and (iv) a fourth group, of a unilateral kind, consisting of persons related through the mother only." He then named these groups respectively: (i) the family; (ii) the kindred; (iii) the patrilineal joint family; and (iv) the matrilineal joint family.

Rivers says of the kindred that "this form of grouping is rare" and, like Phillpotts, theoretically conceives of it as consisting of all persons related to Ego either through his mother or father: "When I speak of a kindred, I shall mean a group consisting of persons related to one another, other than by marriage, through both father and mother." The curious phrase here is "related to one another." This could be interpreted

to indicate that the kindred consists only of Ego's kin who were cognatic kin to each other, therefore making it a descent group instead of an Ego-oriented network of parental kin. This would be in agreement with the *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* usage cited earlier. Codrington too, for example, uses the term kindred as well as kin to refer to what are certainly descent groups. But from Rivers' general treatment of the kindred we can be almost certain that his definition of kindred is a case of an unhappy choice of words. It is a typical example of the ambiguities that pervade the concept of kindred. Similarly, Murdock appears to contradict himself when he writes that the kindred "is not a group except from the point of view of a particular individual," yet he also conceives of the kindred as an actualized, even united, kinship group.

But the important point for the present discussion is that implicit in Rivers' remarks regarding the kindred and the joint family as "bilateral and unilateral" forms of the family is the assumption that within the context of a single society these are mutually exclusive structures. This is not necessarily true, however, because the kindred as an Ego-oriented network of kin and the joint family as an extended corporate kin group are constructs abstracted from different system-references.

Phillpotts, as we have seen, examined the kindred by studying kin ties in the feud, but Rivers, although acknowledging Phillpotts' work, turned to his own field work in the Solomons among the Eddystone Islanders. In this society "there are no social groups corresponding to clans" and the socially important unit of kinship is the *taviti* considered to be "the best modern example" of the kindred. In regard to its composition Rivers writes that: "Since pedigrees are preserved for about four generations, this means that a person includes in the group he calls *taviti* all those whom we should call first, second or third cousins, whether related through the father or mother." Since his documentation of the overall social structure of Eddystone is somewhat shadowy, the *taviti* as a native linguistic category for a unit of kin floats in social space. However, from the various sketchy references to the *taviti* throughout his writings, it does emerge as a network of paternal and maternal kin to whom Ego is *equally* filiated.

Rivers' theoretical discussions of the kindred succeeded in establishing it in the anthropological literature as a type of "bilateral grouping" of kin that is especially characteristic of societies without extended corporate kin groups. Murdock, following Rivers, accepted this structural image of the kindred in his important cross-cultural survey of kinship institutions and projected on an even larger scale a similar view.

Summarizing our discussion, the kindred as defined by Murdock is not, as he assumes, a specific type of social structure present in some societies and absent in others but a generic term for Ego-oriented networks of kin. His definition of kindred points more to an analytical point of

view than to a substantive finding. This does not mean that the concept of kindred cannot lead to structural formulations. Just as anthropologists have discerned from their field experience various types of lineage systems, so is it possible to discern types of kindred systems by observing, cross-culturally, patterned kinship relations from the social perspective of Ego. Regrettably, incorrect theory has distorted our thinking and impeded this essential task. As anthropologists, many of us have been operating with the explicit assumption that kindreds are especially characteristic of cognatic kinship systems with the additional implicit assumption that Ego is *equally* filiated in terms of kinship obligations to both paternal and maternal kin. This, in turn, has necessitated the view that kindreds in unilineal kinship systems are something of a structural anomaly in spite of the fact that some analysts of unilineal kinship systems have examined kinship from the Ego perspective and have documented a kindred structure with a *unilateral* weighting of Ego's kinship obligations.

Perhaps if we had been more concerned with cross-cultural comparisons of features of kindreds than with the idea of the kindred *per se*, we might have avoided the present confusion. For example Murdock records the presence of kindreds among New Englanders as well as among the East African Nuer. However, a review of the field monographs reveals that although neither society distinguishes in terms of *sentiment* between paternal and maternal kin, the New Englanders' *economic* obligations are also parentally bilateral whereas the Nuer's are culturally weighted unilaterally, because membership in a patrilineage influences the direction and content of many of their economic activities with kin. But instead of such comparative formulations in positive terms of the various structural features of kindreds, we seem only to have succeeded in establishing a negative model for an analytical point of view by emphasizing what a kindred is not: e.g. it can have no leader; it is never the same except for siblings; it is not a descent group; it is not a corporate group; it has no name except in reference to its personal focus; its boundaries are shifting, etc.

If we are seriously interested in attaining a similar sophisticated level of structural analysis for the study of kindreds as has been achieved for the study of descent groups, we must acknowledge some of the methodological problems that are inherent in the Ego focus for studying kin relationships. But we should first agree to some basic premises that can provide a common orientation to the concept of kindred. These are: (1) to recognize clearly that the kindred is a type of kinship structure derived from the analysis of the kinship relations of Ego; (2) that this methodological approach is valid in all societies; (3) that social structure is not derived exclusively from native linguistic categories for social groupings but that anthropological observations of social participation

with kin is of even greater importance; (4) that the kindred is a generic term that may subsume a variety of structural types; (5) that the kindred as an Ego-oriented network of kin, and the extended kin group as a bounded corporate unit have different system-references and cannot be compared as mutually exclusive structural variations abstracted from the same order of social relations.

Even if we can agree on these five basic premises, the task of building kindred models is difficult because of the inherent nature of the Ego focus. Leach indicates an awareness of some of these problems when he states that "The kindred is rather a relative concept differing in content and extent according to age, interest, and domicile of the individual around whom it is focussed." Developing this approach a step further, the structure as well as the function of the kindred can vary according to: (1) biological factors, e.g., Ego's sex and age, and the sex, age and number of his living kin; (2) ecological and technological factors as these affect social groupings and communication; (3) sociological factors, e.g. residence patterns, kinship nomenclature, corporate kin groups, reciprocal obligations between kin and the nature of the social sanctions that can be invoked for their recognition; and (4) individual personality factors, e.g. Ego's sentiment towards various kin and his willingness to accept the responsibilities of a kin relationship.

Recognition of the above factors in building kindred models will be necessary to raise the level of study of kindreds to that of descent groups. For example, the Phillpotts-Rivers-Murdock theoretical approach to the kindred has over-simplified the nature of Ego's kinship ties by focussing mainly on his ties with paternal and maternal kin. We might agree that these are the significant kin aggregates in our own society for a *child* but this would not be true for an elderly person. For the old, ties with parental kin become less socially effective in later years as their own descendants and the descendants of siblings become the socially significant kin aggregate. Thus the stage of the individual's life cycle is an important variable.

Another type of kinship relation that is related to the life cycle is that based on marriage. Freedman, Geddes, and Nadel include affines as well as cognates within the kindred but both Rivers and Freeman inexplicably exclude affinal kin from the kindred. Sociologically speaking, this is difficult to comprehend because a married person in any society, via the conjugal liaison with his spouse, assumes towards her cognates and their spouses—his new affines—kinship rights and duties that are variously social, ritual and economic. Thus, while complicating the construction of kindred models, the inclusion of a temporal dimension does help us to understand better the structure of Ego's changing social relationships as he ages and attains new and different social statuses.

These are but some of the methodological problems that will have to



be solved before we can meaningfully discuss structural features of kindreds cross-culturally. Our aim has been only to document some of the theoretical problems in the concept of kindred and, specifically, to demonstrate that the present approach to plotting its ethnographic distribution is open to serious question. Although this paper does not pretend to answer all of the problems raised by the analysis, it is hoped that their presentation will stimulate a critical re-evaluation of the meaning and usefulness of the kindred as a construct in social anthropology.

## 26 Political Anthropology<sup>1</sup>

Marc J. Swartz,  
Victor W. Turner and  
Arthur Tuden



POLITICS, SAYS POLITICAL SCIENTIST HAROLD LASWELL, IS THE SCIENCE OF *who gets what, when, and how*. Anthropologists have always been interested in this. Over the course of years, however, approaches have changed and problems have been differently defined, nowhere more so than with regard to the study of political phenomena. Until fairly recently, the main focus of interest was on problems of political evolution.

<sup>1</sup> The authors are indebted to Peter Worsley, Ralph Nicholas, and Moreau Maxwell for reading, and commenting on, this introduction. Professor Worsley made the interesting observation that we shifted from an economic metaphor when we were discussing legitimacy and support to a military metaphor when we took up the phases of overall political processes. Although we received much benefit from our colleagues' comments, the responsibility for the positions taken here is solely the authors'.

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*This remains an important area of concern (see 11:27), but major attention has shifted to functional analysis of political systems. The shift has exacerbated an already difficult problem of terminology and definitions. If the reader merely considers the first sentence in this paragraph he will face a major question: What is politics and how does it differ from economics? Since one of the main goals of functional analysis is to clarify relations between different parts of a system, or between different systems, or subsystems, it becomes essential to delineate parts, systems, or subsystems as precisely as possible. Such an attempt comprises a large part of the collaborative article below. The article does more than this, for it presents perhaps the best available synthesis of current anthropological research interests in political anthropology. Indeed, it neglects only one important aspect: the evolution of political society.*

## I

The book to which this is the introduction was the outgrowth of an experiment. Its editors, curious to explore current trends and styles of analysis in political anthropology, decided to ask a number of distinguished practitioners in this field to contribute papers for presentation at the 1964 Annual General Meeting of the American Anthropological Association. It was decided that the contributors were to be given considerable leeway in their choice and treatment of topics, for our aim was to find out whether "a wind of change" was invading political theory as had invaded the actual politics of most societies that have been studied by anthropologists.

As the papers came in, it soon became clear that this is indeed the case. Since the last major bench mark in the anthropology of politics, *African Political Systems* (edited by Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, 1940), which has been both stimulus and model for several well-known anthologies, monographs, and articles, there has been a trend—at first almost imperceptible, then gaining momentum in the late 1950's and early 1960's—away from the earlier preoccupation with the taxonomy, structure, and function of political systems to a growing concern with the study of political processes. Professor Firth, with his flair for the detection of new theoretical tendencies, aptly characterized the new mood as one in which anthropologists would forsake "the well-trodden ground of conventional structural analysis for a type of inquiry which is from the outset an examination of 'dynamic phenomena.'"

Indeed, many of the papers we received centered their discussions on dynamic political phenomena and processes. They considered both repetitive and radical political change, the processes of decision-making and conflict resolution, and the agitation and settlement of political issues in a variety of cultural contexts. The papers were pervaded by a "becom-

ing” rather than a “being” vocabulary: they were full of such terms as “conflict,” “faction,” “struggle,” “conflict resolution,” “arena,” “development,” “process,” and so forth. It is true that this stress on the processual dimension of politics had been foreshadowed and prepared by a number of important books, some of which had first appeared soon after the publication of *African Political Systems*. Perhaps the most notable of these pioneer studies of political dynamics—although its major emphasis was on law rather than politics—was *The Cheyenne Way* by Llewellyn and Hoebel, which focused attention on conflicts of interests and on the notion that “trouble cases lead us most directly to legal phenomena.” The same outlook, applied to political behavior, clearly guides many of the contributors to this present volume. No fewer than five articles are directly concerned with the resolution of conflict and the settlement of disputes.

Few processes of political action run harmonious courses. It is not surprising, therefore, that processual studies tend also to study conflict, as well as its resolution. Several social philosophers have contributed to our vocabulary of concepts for the analysis of conflict; these include Hegel, with his “dialectic,” Marx, with his “contradiction” and “struggle,” and Simmel with his “conflict.” More recently, Coser has done much to familiarize us with a more refined and systematic exposition of Simmel’s theoretical standpoint. But within the strictly anthropological tradition, the application of these and related concepts to the data of pre-industrial society is perhaps most fully exemplified by the work of Max Gluckman and the so-called “Manchester School.”

These anthropologists, working with “the extended case method,” have tended to lay emphasis on the processual aspect of politics in tribal societies, and even in certain sectors of complex societies. In Gluckman’s words:

. . . they are now analyzing the development of social relations themselves, under the conflicting pressures of discrepant principles and values, as the generations change and new persons come to maturity. If we view these relations through a longish period of time, we see how various parties and supporters operate and manipulate mystical beliefs of various kinds to serve their interests. The beliefs are seen in dynamic process within day-to-day social life, and the creation and burgeoning of new groups and relationships.

This formulation, although it depends rather heavily upon the doctrine of the primacy of “interest” and underestimates the capacity of “mystical beliefs” to evoke altruistic responses from members of a social group, is nevertheless a good summary of the main characteristics of this nascent type of analysis.

The shift in emphasis from static and synchronic analyses of morphological types to dynamic and diachronic studies of societies in change

was also evident in Evans-Pritchard's insistence, throughout the 1950's, that modern social anthropologists must consider the histories of the societies they study, in Firth's notion of "organizational change" (gradual and cumulative rather than radical structural change), and in the Cambridge University work on developmental cycles. But, in the main, these studies emphasized repetitive change that—at the end of a cycle of institutionally "triggered off" modifications in the pattern and content of social relations—brought about a regular return to the status quo ante. Again it was Gluckman who drew attention to radical change, or change in the social structure, for example, "in the size of a society, the composition or balance of its parts, or the type of organization." Gluckman's fieldwork in the plural society of Zululand led him to reject the then dominant model of a social system as a set of functionally interconnected components, moving by graduated stages through culturally defined equilibria—or, at most, changing so slowly that no disruption of equilibrium or integration could occur.

From the viewpoint of the sociology of knowledge, it is no accident that this alteration of analytical focus from structure to process has developed during a period in which the formerly colonial territories of Asia, Africa, and the Pacific have been undergoing far-reaching political changes that have culminated in independence. Anthropologists who directed or undertook fieldwork during the 1950's and early 1960's found that they could not ignore or neglect the processes of change or resistance to change, whose concrete expressions were all around them. Many of these anthropologists worked in plural societies, characterized by ethnic diversity, sharp economic inequalities between ethnic groups, religious differences, political and legal heterogeneity—in short, major asymmetries of sociocultural scale and complexity between their ethnic constituents.

Such societies have been conceptualized not so much as tightly integrated systems, modeled on either organic or mechanical analogues, but as social fields with many dimensions, with parts that may be loosely integrated, or virtually independent from one another, and that have to be studied over time if the factors underlying the changes in their social relationships are to be identified and analyzed. Probably because of the magnitude of the new tasks confronting them, anthropologists have so far generally eschewed the attempt to portray and analyze social fields in anything like their full complexity or temporal depth. Rather, they have attempted to isolate single sectors, or subsectors, within a single dimension of such fields, and have then endeavored to say something significant about the processes they have found there. Nevertheless, their work is almost always impregnated by awareness of the wider context and of its major properties—such as plurality, diversity, componential

looseness of fit, conflict, variations in degree of consensus (ranging to complete lack of consensus), and the like.

## II

The dimension that concerns us in this book is the political dimension, and within it we shall consider those relationships between personalities and groups that make up a "political field." Clearly, such concepts depend on what is meant by "politics." "Politics," however, is almost as difficult to define as it is easy to use as a description of occurrences within societies and their constituent parts. It is easy to sympathize with those who, like Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, avoid defining the term, for the concept has a wide range of useful application and the great variety of data to which it is applied makes operational specification difficult.

Still, we can hardly call this volume *Political Anthropology*, and bombard the reader with political concepts and theoretical constructs, if we do not provide a rather concise idea of what it is that we are talking about.

Several qualities that lead us to consider a process as political are readily noted and widely accepted as characteristic. First, a political process is public rather than private. An activity that affects a neighborhood, a whole community, a whole society, or a group of societies is unquestionably a public activity; whether it is *also* a political activity depends upon other characteristics—in addition to its being public. A religious ceremony may affect entire communities, societies, and even groups of societies, but we may not wish to call it a "political activity" (although—and now we begin to see some of the sorrow that is the lot of the would-be definer of this concept—under some circumstances and/or in certain respects we might want to call a religious ceremony "political").

The second generally accepted quality of politics is that it concerns goals. Combining the first characteristic with this second one, we can go a bit further and say that politics always involves public goals. Although individual, private goals will always be importantly involved, the emphasis will be upon goals desired for the group as a whole. These goals will include the achievement of a new relationship vis-à-vis some other group or groups: winning independence, fighting a war or making peace, gaining higher prestige than previously held, changing the relative standing of castes or classes within a group, etc.; a change in the relationship to the environment for all or most members of the group, such as building an irrigation project or clearing land for the whole village, etc.; and the allocation of offices, titles, and other scarce resources for which there is a group-wide competition.

From what has already been said about political goals, it will be clear that consciousness of a desired end is present, but this consciousness need be neither complete nor universal. Some of the members of a group may have little or no idea of what is being sought; only the leaders may have a clear idea of the end that is being pursued. The "goal" may be only a wish to escape a vaguely conceived dissatisfaction or to achieve a new state or objective that is not clearly formulated. Leaders may present their publics with goals that are, in a sense, only artifices for furthering a more distant or hidden end. Thus a trade union leader may call a strike over wages and working conditions, and the union members may believe these are the ultimate goals. The leader, however, may be using the strike to improve his position vis-à-vis other leaders and/or government officials. It is true that politics always concerns goals, but it is useful to recognize that "goal" is not a univocal concept and that all we are requiring here is that there be a striving for something for which there is competition. This competition, however, must be of a particular kind, and, to explain this, it is necessary to look briefly at what is meant by its being "group-wide."

In our society, money is competed for on a group-wide basis, but we would not say that this competition is necessarily political in character. What is meant here is that political allocations are those that require the consent of an entire group in order to be effectively made. Thus while every individual or unit in a society may be competing with every other individual or unit for an economic good, such as money, the results of these competitions do not require group-wide consent in order to be effective. However, competition for titles in, say, a West African society cannot be said to be settled unless the whole group consents to the allocation of the titles that results from the competition. Thus for allocation to be political in nature it must concern scarce goods, the possession of which depends upon a group's consenting to the allocation.

Another important end that is characteristic of politics is achieving settlements that are of public rather than only private concern. Settlements, to be public, must concern a group as a whole, in a rather direct and immediate way. Settling a quarrel between two friends—or between a man and wife—will be considered a public settlement if its accomplishment (or failure) affects, say, the immediate threat of a schism that would divide the whole group or realign the factions that exist within the group. Clearly, some settlements will be public and some will be private, and others will be hard to identify immediately. In this last (probably large) category, we can extract ourselves from vagueness by adhering to the "by-their-fruits-ye-shall-know-them" doctrine, considering all settlements as possibly political until the consequences of each case can be established by detailed investigation. If we find that a settle-

ment or failure of settlement has implications for a group as a whole, we will call it "political" even though at its outset it did not appear to have group-wide consequences.

It is important to dwell a moment on "failure of settlement" and its implications for what is meant by "politics." Political activity is sometimes devoted to the prevention of settlements and to the subversion of the institutional framework by which settlements are reached. In this sort of situation we would not fail to note that a group, the "rebels," seeks a public goal—namely, the realignment of the resources and members of a larger group with which they were associated—and that this group carries out political activity as we have so far defined it.

The significance of this activity for the definition being presented is twofold. First, it must be made clear that politics does not consist entirely of activities that ultimately, or necessarily, promote the welfare and continued existence of a group, as constituted and organized at any particular time. Political activity includes all sorts of seeking-after-public-goals, which may be as concerned with the deracination of existing structures, mechanisms, and alignments as with their preservation.

Second, this consideration of disjunctive activity in politics provides an opportunity to clarify what is meant by goals and settlements that have consequences for a group. A "group" need not be a whole society, or even a major segment of a society; a number of individuals may join together in rejection of the goals and aims of the larger group of which they were formerly part. These individuals may constitute a faction or a special interest group that devotes its energies to inducing conflict—rather than to promoting settlements—with the aim of overthrowing the organization of its parent body and/or changing the basic aims of that body. Such activities are clearly political, and the fact that the faction or special interest group uses noninstitutional means for seeking its ends (violence, for example) does not alter the political nature of its behavior.

A final major characteristic of "politics" is implicit in what has just been said: it involves some kind of focusing of power—using "power" in its broadest sense. This focusing need not entail the existence of a permanent hierarchy of power, but it will always involve the existence of differential behavior concerning public goals. Conceivably, the differential may be no more than that certain individuals announce group goals that have been jointly decided upon by all members of a group, participating equally—or it may be that a very few members determine a group's goals and that the others merely carry out the decisions. A differential will always be present.

We therefore have three characteristics that should serve to start our division of the universe into what is political and what is not. The adjective "political," as we have so far defined it, will apply to everything



that is at once public, goal-oriented, and that involves a differential of power (in the sense of control) among the individuals of the group in question.

This tentative definition does not solve the sort of problem illustrated earlier by the example of the religious ceremony. A religious ceremony could have all the characteristics so far proposed: it could be public (everybody participates and is concerned with it), goal-oriented (it changes a group's relationship to the environment by ending a drought), and it could involve a differential possession of power (ritual experts could tell the others what to do), but we might be reluctant to say that the ceremony is primarily a political activity.

An obvious way out of this difficulty would be to overlook our reluctance and declare the ceremony a political activity on the entirely valid grounds that we can define things however we wish without any fear of our definitions being either true or false. But a more satisfying solution is available, which comes from our being able to look at an activity from different points of view. If we look at the religious ceremony from the point of view of the processes by which the group goals are determined and implemented (how it was decided that a ceremony was to be held, how the time and place were determined, how the things to be used in the ceremony were obtained, etc.) and by which power is differentially acquired (which ritual experts are successful in telling the "laity" what to do, how these experts marshal support for their power and undermine that of their rivals, etc.), we are studying politics. If, however, we look at the ritual from the perspective, say, of the way it relates the group to the supernatural and the way this relationship affects the relations among the constituent parts of the group, we are studying religion—or at least we are studying something other than politics.

The study of politics, then, is the study of the *processes* involved in determining and implementing public goals and in the differential achievement and use of power by the members of the group concerned with those goals.

In the remainder of this introduction a good deal will be said about the nature of political processes, so that (for the present) it is enough to point out that these processes are the key elements in politics. From the perspective of politics, processes such as marshaling support, undermining rivals, attaining goals, and achieving settlements are the prime foci of interest. The groups within which these processes occur are important because they constitute the "field" of political activity, but this activity moves across group boundaries without necessarily encountering hindrances, which is another way of saying the political field can expand and contract.

The important point here is that since politics is the study of certain kinds of processes, it is essential to center our attention on these pro-

cesses rather than on the groups or fields within which they occur. This means, for example, that a political study follows the development of conflicts for power (or for acquiring support for proposed goals) into whatever groups the processes lead—rather than examining such groups as lineages, villages, or countries to determine what processes they might contain. To focus upon groups would be to credit them with a wholeness and a completeness that is not justified, for the understanding of what is happening in a village struggle for leadership may require an examination of the roots of the struggle in the national context.

To put this another way, political anthropology no longer exclusively studies—in structural-functionalist terms—political institutions of cyclical, repetitive societies. Its unit of space is no longer the isolated “society”; it tends to be the political “field.” Its unit of time is no longer “structural time”; it is historical time. The combined unit is a spatial-temporal continuum.

A political field does not operate like clockwork, with all the pieces meshed together with finely tooled precision. It is, rather, a field of tension, full of intelligent and determined antagonists, sole and corporate, who are motivated by ambition, altruism, self-interest, and by desire for the public good, and who in successive situations are bound to one another through self-interest, or idealism—and separated or opposed through the same motives. At every point in this process we have to consider each unit in terms of its independent objectives, and we also have to consider the entire situation in which their *interdependent* actions occur. This independence and this interdependence are emphatically not those of the parts of a machine or an animal. The institutionalization of political relationships may sometimes impose upon the observer the delusory appearance of mechanical or organic phenomena, but they are mere analogies that blind us to some of the most important qualities of political behavior. To understand such behavior, we have to know how the political “units” think, feel, and will in relation to their understanding of the issues that they generate or confront. As Parsons and Emmet have shown us, the factor of purposiveness is analytically crucial to the concept of political action.

### III

Mention of Talcott Parsons reminds us of the impressive contribution that social philosophers and sociologists—Parsons himself, and Durkheim, Weber, Bierstedt, and Bales—and political scientists—such as Lasswell, Kaplan, Easton, M. Levy, and Banfield—to name only a few—have made to the study of political processes. Although anthropologists have tended to be extremely suspicious of the theories of political philosophers, as displayed in many ways—from the strictures in *African*

*Political Systems* to the less draconic pronouncements in current publications, we consider that the time is now ripe for dialogue, if not for marriage, between anthropology and other disciplines concerned with comparative politics.

From the sociologists and political scientists we hope to obtain a tool kit of concepts that, with some modification, will prove useful to anthropologists when they examine political behavior in real societies—but that will not unduly restrict assumptions about the nature of this behavior. Ideally, concepts for analyzing politics would be as applicable in societies that do not have centralized and/or permanent decision-making units as in societies that have such units; in societies where change is rapid and drastic, and in those where it is slow and gradual; in societies where the great bulk of the population has many important values, motivations, and relationships in common, and in societies where the population has little in common. In short, the purpose here is to present concepts of general applicability, which also allow recognition of the diversity of political systems.

#### FORCE AND COERCION

In most of the writing on political behavior, much attention has been paid to the role of coercion in general and force in particular. This is understandable in that some of the more obvious and striking types of political behavior involve the use, or threat, of force. Furthermore, the notion that politics has to do with decisions that apply to society as a whole quite naturally leads to an emphasis on the opposition between the interests of the individual and those of the group.

Despite its undeniable importance, insuperable difficulties confront the view that force is the sole, or even the major, basis of political behavior. These difficulties arise from the fact that force is a crude and expensive technique for the implementation of decisions. More important, force itself has to depend on interpersonal relationships that are based on something *other* than force.

The crudity and essential inflexibility of force were intriguingly discussed by Talcott Parsons in the course of his extensive analysis of parallels between politics and economics. He compared the role of force in politics to that of gold in a monetary system. Both have great effectiveness, and both may operate with a high degree of independence from their institutional contexts, but excessive dependence on either leads to rigidity and a reduction in the number and type of things that the systems can do. A monetary system that relies heavily on gold in its day-to-day transactions would be primitive and clumsy, and the same would be true of a political system that is heavily dependent on force.

The fact that force must rely on relationships based on something other than force has been pointed out by Goldhamer and Shils: the more

that force is used in a system, the larger must be the staff needed to apply it—and the greater the dependence of the users on that staff. Although the relationship between those who apply force, on the one hand, and those to whom it is applied, on the other, may be based entirely on force, there must nevertheless be relationships *within the force-using group* that are based on something else.

#### SUPPORT AND LEGITIMACY

If we understand “support” to mean anything that contributes to the formulation and/or implementation of political ends, we can say that although force (which is a form of support) may have an important part to play in political systems, it can never be the only means of support in the systems. Force as a mode of support must always be supplemented by other modes of support.

“Legitimacy” is a type of support that derives not from force or its threat but from the values held by the individuals formulating, influencing, and being affected by political ends. Clearly, because decisions are made on less than a group-wide scale, “legitimacy” is not limited in its applicability to the area of politics. Here, however, our attention will be reserved for the uses of legitimacy in a political context.

The derivation of legitimacy from values comes through the establishment of a positive connection between the entity or process having legitimacy and those values. This connection can be established in a number of different ways (some of which will be discussed below), but in all cases it involves a set of expectations in the minds of those who accept the legitimacy. These expectations are to the effect that the legitimate entity or process will, under certain circumstances, meet certain obligations that are held by those who view it as legitimate. These obligations may be either specific (a legitimate chief will bring rain when it is needed) or general (a legitimate court will render a just decision), but it is important to note that they operate as predictions of what will happen in the future and not simply as accounts of what has happened in the past. Legitimacy is a type of evaluation that imputes future behavior of an expected and desired type.

Legitimacy and all other types of support may be viewed most fruitfully in connection with various aspects of the political process rather than as applicable to total systems. That is, instead of trying to decide what kinds of support a whole political system may have, or whether the system as a whole is legitimate, increased analytic power can be gained by dividing the political system into a number of aspects or levels and examining each for the presence or absence of legitimacy, force, and other types of support. It is, of course, necessary to establish empirically the types of support that are decisive for political action on each level.

David Easton has suggested three aspects of the political system that

are useful in an analysis of this sort. The first of these is what he calls "the political community." This is the largest group within which differences can be settled and decisions promoted through peaceful action. Clearly, force cannot be an important type of support for this entity, and legitimacy (that is, expectations of desirable sorts of settlements and decision implementations) will often, but not necessarily, be an important element. What Easton calls "the political community" and what we call "the political field" are distinct concepts. A "political field" may be coterminous with a "political community"; it may contain two or more political communities in relationships of cooperation or conflict; it may involve a political community and groups or individuals from outside that community; or it may not involve political communities.

Easton's second aspect is "the regime," which "consists of all those arrangements that regulate the way the demands put into the system are settled and the way in which decisions are put into effect." Easton views these procedures as "the rules of the game" and as the criteria for legitimizing the actions of those involved in the political process. This, however, departs from the view of legitimacy taken here. Although the analytical usefulness of separating the procedures for reaching and implementing decisions is considerable, it is important to note that these procedures may or may not be viewed as legitimate. Thus it seems more fruitful to view "the rules of the game" or "regime" as the standard for *legality* and to leave the question unanswered whether the support of the rules or regime is derived from legitimacy or from some other source. As a product of these rules, legality will depend upon the status of the rules for its own status. Thus to the extent that the rules rest on force, legality will rest on force; to the extent that the rules rest on legitimacy, the difference between legality and legitimacy will be diminished. M. G. Smith has directed attention to the important distinction between legitimacy and legality, pointing out that whereas "law circumscribes legality, legitimacy is often invoked to sanction and justify actions contrary to existing law."

Easton's final aspect is "government," and this in his view consists of both the political officials and the "administrative organization" of which they are part. For our purposes it is preferable to separate the officials from the "organization," so that "government" will here refer only to the interconnected series of statuses whose roles are primarily concerned with making and implementing political decision. Unlike a political community and regime, every society need not have a government, because making and implementing decisions can be (and often is) diffused among statuses whose roles include many duties other than (and sometimes more important than) making and implementing political decisions. As in the previous two analytic levels, however, a government, when it is present, may or may not have legitimacy as one of its major

sources of support. The government of a group will be considered legitimate when the members of the group, its "public" believe—on the basis of experience—that the government will produce decisions that are in accord with the public's expectations.

#### POLITICAL STATUS, OFFICIAL, AND DECISION

Three further concepts may be usefully distinguished with reference to types of support: political status, official, and decision, none of which is dependent on the existence of government for its existence. A "political status," which is a position whose role is primarily that of making and/or implementing political decisions, may or may not be part of a network of political statuses, but in either case it may be examined for legitimacy or other types of support. Similarly, a "political official," although he must be the occupant of a political status, may or may not be part of a governmental structure; he may be the object of support of any or all types, independently of the types that are accorded his status. For example, an official may be considered legitimate or illegitimate independently of the legitimacy or absence of legitimacy of the government of which he is part, even if there is such a structure.

A "decision" is a pronouncement that concerns goals, allocations, or settlements that must ultimately originate from an entity (although the members of the group in question may not identify its source accurately) in the political system. However, the type of support, if any, that the decision receives may or may not be the same as the support accorded the sources of the decision. Among other things, this means that the decision may be legitimate even though the entity identified as its source is not, and that the decision may be illegitimate even though its source is legitimate. Indeed, the type of support discovered as operative at one level of analysis does not determine the type or types operative at another level. For example, although a political community and regime might be legitimate, this would not assure the legitimacy of the government, or of particular political statuses, officials, or decisions. As Easton put it: "It is always a matter for empirical inquiry to discover the degree to which support at one level is dependent upon support at the others."

Just as different types of support can exist simultaneously at different levels of analysis, different types of support can operate at the same level at different times (as we will see in Section IV of this introduction). This is true of all types of support, including legitimacy, which may fairly be regarded as a particularly stable attribute of political phenomena, relationships, and processes. For example, an official may begin his political career through a ritual that serves to establish positive expectations in the minds of those affected by him so that, at the beginning of his career in office, support is through legitimacy. In the course

of political activity, however, an official may consistently fail to meet these expectations and so lose the legitimacy gained through the ritual at the outset of his career. If he is to continue to fulfill his duties, he must have the support of some other type (or types), whether this be through force, the absence of alternatives, or some of the other types that will be discussed presently.

Similarly, legitimacy may not be associated with a political entity at the beginning of a career, but, through meeting expectations, the entity may come to achieve legitimacy, and to depend upon this type of support—more than (or even instead of) the type or types with which it began. Thus Bena headmen and village executive officers attain support (legitimacy) through their successful functioning as adjudicators. However, they do not begin their tenure in office with this sort of support, at least not necessarily. Instead, their early days in office are supported by extensions of personal support accorded their statuses and by supports deriving from the fact that they are appointed by the national government. Among the Ndembu of Zambia claimants for an important politico-ritual office assert their claims in terms of different criteria of legitimacy, so that their competition is at the same time a process of testing the contemporary validity of the rival criteria.

A particularly interesting example of the impermanence of a given type of support is provided by the Kanuri. The Kanuri believe that success or failure by an individual is due to the amount of *arziyi*, which is a part of the individual's being, has provided for a self-legitimizing of officeholders. That they achieve office proves that they have more *arziyi* than others, but failure in office proves that their *arziyi* has decreased. Thus the belief in *arziyi* and in its variability among and within individuals can be viewed as an institutionalized means of estimating how well an officeholder will meet the expectations others have of him. When his *arziyi* is plentiful, he will be able to do what is required of him, but when it is not so bounteous he will not be able to do so. Thus his ability to gain office and to have retained it is proof of his ability to do what is or will be expected of him.

It will be clear from what has already been said that although legitimacy is only one member of the larger class of support, it is an important member. What must be examined now is whether it is fruitful to postulate the existence of legitimacy in all political systems.

#### POWER AND LEGITIMACY

Parsons argues very stimulatingly that "power" should be understood to rest upon legitimacy. To simplify a highly ramified and complex position, he holds that power is the "generalized capacity to secure the performance of binding obligations—where in case of recalcitrance

there is a presumption of enforcement by negative . . . sanctions." Despite the place occupied by negative sanctions (we will return to this in a moment), the essence of Parsons' position is seen in his view that the exercise of power is an interaction in which the power holder gains compliance with a decision concerning group goals in exchange for the understanding that the complying entity is entitled to invoke certain obligations in the future. In other words, obedience to the leader is conditioned upon his undertaking (tacitly or explicitly) to reciprocate later on with beneficial actions.

Power, in this context, is a symbolic medium whose functioning does not depend primarily upon its intrinsic effectiveness but upon the expectations that its employment arouses in those who comply with it. Among the Bena, as described by Swartz, the power of the village officials depends upon the expectations of the villagers that the officials will be successful settlers of disputes. Because power is symbolic, it is a generalized medium that operates independently of particular circumstances, sanctions, situations, or individuals. Power, in this sense, we propose to call "consensual power," to distinguish it from power based on coercion. In the sense in which we use it here, power may be regarded as the dynamic aspect of legitimacy, as legitimacy put to the test of social action.

Compliance based on consensual power is motivated by the belief (which may be only vaguely formulated) that at some time in the future the official, agency, government, etc., with which individuals comply will satisfy the compliers' positive expectations. This compliance may be with directives or regulations which are not congenial (for example, doing *corvée* labor), and when there is little or no prospect of a direct return from obeying the directives or regulations. However, if consensual power is present as an attribute of the source of the directives, compliance will result from the belief that in its overall operation the official, agency, or government will sooner or later bring about desired results or continue some desired state. Thus *corvée* labor may not be viewed by the workers as producing any desired result, but the official who orders it may be viewed as likely to do something desired. Because compliance based on consensual power is divorced from immediate dependence or gratification, consensual power allows much more flexibility than does compliance based on other types of support.

There may be little or even no consensual power in a given system, or there may be a great deal, but the amount of consensual power present will determine the flexibility of the system with respect to its ability to make and implement decisions in situations that are different from those previously encountered. This flexibility is in part the result of the element of legitimacy in consensual power that frees it from dependence



upon particular sanctions, and in part it is the result of its being free from particular, concrete rewards.<sup>2</sup>

This is not to say that systems cannot operate without legitimacy (any more than it is true to say that any system is completely based upon legitimacy), but rather that as legitimacy in the imposing of obligations decreases, the suppleness of the system also decreases. Parsons puts this as follows:

. . . questioning the legitimacy of the possession and use of power leads to resort to progressively more "secure" means of gaining compliance. These must be progressively more effective "intrinsically," hence more tailored to the particular situation . . . and less general. Furthermore, insofar as they are intrinsically effective, legitimacy becomes a progressively less important factor of their effectiveness . . . at the end of this series lies resort, first to various types of coercion, eventually to the use of force as the most intrinsically effective of all means of coercion.

It should be noted that the element of legitimacy in consensual power has implications for both parties to an interaction that involves this kind of power. In other words, power in this sense has two sides. It involves obedience by those on whom it is exerted; nevertheless, it also implicates the wielder's power in the values he shares with the objects of power, values that take the form of the expectations of those who obey the powerful. Thus the connection with the value system that gives the power users the unique advantage of flexibility also gives the power objects the advantage of being able to invoke their legitimate expectations. Should these not be met on a regular basis, the legitimacy of the consensual power is thereby reduced and the system's flexibility undermined. In such a situation the system could go on operating, but compliance would be obtained mainly through an appeal to the coercion that serves as the "grounding" of the power system—but whose extensive use, in Parsons' analogy, would be similar to substituting the gold that is the grounding of a monetary system for the symbolic, paper money that has no intrinsic value.

In other words, a political system, in the absence of extensive legitimacy, is an extremely crude instrument for attaining group goals, settlements, and allocations because it does not have a "generalized capacity to secure performance." Indeed, if all legitimacy is removed, a political system is not analogous to a primitive monetary system based on an intrinsically valuable commodity (such as gold, which, though crude,

<sup>2</sup> It should be emphasized that "consensual power" is a special concept, defined in terms of its dependence upon legitimacy for its effectiveness. "Power," as an unqualified term, here refers to a broader phenomenon, involving control of behavior through superior force and/or superior command of human and other resources. "Power," is more commonly used in the literature than "consensual power."

has some general usefulness in exchange) but to a barter system with all the limitations such a system implies.

The answer to the question whether all political systems must be conceived as involving legitimacy is clearly a contingent one. If a system can achieve its group goals on a barter basis, exchanging (ultimately) force for compliance, there is no reason to assume that such a system must contain legitimacy in the form of political power—as that concept is defined here—although legitimacy may be present at some other focus. Among the Kuikuru described by Dole, the only obvious locus for consensual power is the status of the shaman. However, in his role as agent of social control the shaman serves to bring coercion on deviants through a focusing of group opinion and a consequent mobilization of force against them. This is clearly not consensual power, as the concept is used here, but rather a “barter” in which conformity is exchanged for freedom from physical harm. This type of process fits within our view of political behavior because it involves decisions (in this case settlements) that affect the group as a whole; but there is no evidence to indicate that it entails the imposition of obligations through legitimacy.

It might be argued, however, that there is legitimacy in Kuikuru politics at the level of the political community. That is, although the processes by which settlements are achieved are not based on legitimacy, the political community *is* so based—in the sense that the members of the group believe that, by whatever means, their expectations concerning the settlement of disputes will at least sometimes be met within the confines of the group.

The general point of importance here is that the type of support at one level is not necessarily dependent upon the type found at another. The fact that a political community is supported through being legitimate does not mean that the means of gaining compliance within that community need be legitimate. An interesting consequence of taking the view that the types of support found at various levels are analytically independent is seen in the relationship between regime (“rules of the game”) and power.

#### THE AUTHORITY CODE

We repeat that consensual power, and indeed *power* in all the senses in which it may be thought of, is the capacity to secure compliance with binding decisions. It will therefore be clear that if there is more than one locus of power in a system, the absence of a system of priorities among the obligations can lead to chaos. This will be the consequence of the simultaneous commitment of the group to different and possibly conflicting obligations. It can further be envisioned that the same situation can result if there is only one power locus, if that locus is the source of more than a very few decisions and if there is no system whereby pri-

orities are allocated. This system of priorities can be established, when it is required, by a hierarchy of power. Such a hierarchy may be thought of in terms of a differential assignment to particular statuses in the group of rights to use and acquire power. This system of assignment will be called "the authority code," and the rights assigned under it to statuses will be called "authority."

The authority code is one crucial part of what has been called the regime, and, in a regime based on legitimacy, this code will ordinarily be supported by a direct connection with the value system; for example, the divine right of kings, which establishes a connection between an authority code and a set of supernaturally supported values. John Middleton's analysis of conflict resolution among the Lugbara, for example, makes it obvious that the supernatural basis of consensual power gives it legitimacy. More than this, the *assignment* of this power to individuals has its legitimacy unambiguously signaled in the sickness brought by ancestral ghosts to those who defy the power user. The elders who invoke the punitive dead are thus able to show they are in good standing with the ancestral source of legitimacy and can function as legitimate sources of consensual power. Interestingly, the possibility of claiming that sickness was the result of witchcraft rather than ghost invocation indicates one of the Lugbara devices for attacking or impugning an elder's claim to legitimacy.

When these concepts are fed back into analyses of the phases of political developments, one can see how different types of support are manipulated by interested parties in sectional or factional struggles for positions of power and authority, and that an important part of this manipulation is the effort to establish the legitimacy of one's own ends and means and to throw doubt on those of one's opponents. However, the authority code need not be directly supported by common values, even when the obligations imposed by those holding power under the code are supported in this way. To put this rather differently, there is no analytic reason for viewing authority, or the procedure under which it is assigned to statuses, as necessarily legitimate even though the power that derives from this authority may be legitimate.

We argued earlier that it is fruitful to view legitimacy as an important basis for power in order to differentiate power so based from the less adaptable means for gaining compliance. This argument does not apply to the assignment of power to statuses. Analytically at least, there is no reason why the assignment of power to statuses on the basis of force should not work as well as assignment on the basis of values. The requirement for a hierarchy of obligation would be met in either way so long as the power was differentially assigned, and this is the crucial issue in authority codes. Empirically, it might work out that if the authority code is not based on legitimacy the authority it distributes to statuses

might be less likely to operate through the exchange of compliance for the right to impose obligations at a later date ("consensual power"); but there is no analytic reason for assuming that this is the case. If, for example, a colonial government assigns rights to impose different obligations to various statuses, and these assignments are supported only by the superior force of the colonialists, there is no *a priori* reason to believe that the officials occupying the assigned statuses cannot gain compliance with the obligations allotted them through consensual power, as the term is used in this section, instead of through force alone.

The other side of this argument, of course, is that even though the authority code is supported through its connections with the value system, there is no reason to assume that its right to impose obligations need be exercised through anything other than the direct use of (or the threat or the possibility of the use of) force. Indeed, this is precisely what often happens.

To summarize this part of the discussion, "power" can be usefully defined as involving legitimacy; it is one means of gaining compliance with obligations, and its most important difference from other means is that it allows for greater flexibility. "Power," used in this sense, is referred to as "consensual power." "Authority" is the right to use and acquire power vested in a status by a procedure based on the "authority code" (which is part of the regime). An authority code, and the authority resulting from its application, may or may not be based on legitimacy, but they will function to arrange the power that is present in a system in a hierarchy. Insofar as it is able to do this, a system will operate with minimal conflicts of obligations and interests. However, it must be understood that most systems contain unassigned power, both in its limited sense (defined here) and in its widest sense (defined as the ability to do what one wants to do, with or without the consent of the objects of power).

Our emphasis on the analytic independence of types of support at various foci should not be misinterpreted to mean that an empirical independence is being postulated. Important empirical regularities may well be discovered with reference to the types of relationships that exist among the various sources of support in given systems. For example, the discussion of power will have made it clear that if consensual power is to operate effectively, the objects of that power must have confidence that its users will meet their obligations. This psychological state might well be destroyed if the rights to use and acquire power were assigned on a basis that was not in accord with overall values and norms. In a highly complex political system, it seems particularly likely that this would be the case, but this matter can be established only by empirical investigation. Analytically, there is no reason for adopting a standpoint that asserts a necessary correspondence between these two levels of

analysis—or, indeed, among any of the levels of analysis and the relationship of their sources of support.

#### INTRODUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF SUPPORT

So far, our discussion of support, legitimacy, power, and authority has focused mainly on obligations and the manner in which compliance is obtained. The discussion is now sufficiently advanced to take up two related questions: (1) How is support introduced and maintained within political systems? (2) How are we to classify and conceptualize different types of support?

"Demands," as the concept is used here, are desires of the members of a political community that political decisions of a particular sort be made, which ultimately concern the entire community. Demands may be made by individuals or by combinations of individuals, but in all cases the subject or subjects of the demands will be viewed by the demand makers as appropriate objects for political action. This last requirement of the definition arises from the fact that demands may be articulated statements or messages presented to the occupants of statuses having authority, or they may be diffuse and loosely conceived states of mind that are only indirectly communicated. In the last case, it is necessary to differentiate demands from nonpolitical desires, although it should be noted that a desire is a demand even though other than political action is *also* thought appropriate. Thus the desire of a group of villagers to use village resources to build a bridge, when formulated in a meeting and presented to the appropriate official through an elected spokesman, is a demand—but so is the rather vaguely conceived and formulated desire that theft ought to be prevented, or punished. The latter may be regarded as a demand insofar as the holders of the desire believe that political action is an appropriate means of dealing with theft. It can operate as a demand through dissatisfaction with officials, statuses, and/or governments that fail to control theft, and, conceivably, it could become an important source of disaffection (withdrawal of support) without ever becoming clearly formulated.

Obviously, one means of bringing support into a political system is through the system's fulfilling the demands of its public. We have already seen that an official can achieve legitimacy through consistently meeting the demands of his "constituents," and can thus operate through the use of consensual power instead of less flexible means. However—disregarding for the moment the type of support gained in this way—it seems entirely likely that a system that consistently meets all the demands of those involved would be strongly supported; but it is also likely that no system can meet the demands of "all of the people, all of the time," since the things desired in all societies are necessarily scarce and desires may conflict. Political systems differ greatly both in type (in-

cluding scope) and in the number of demands they contain at any particular moment, but they are similar in that—at least sometimes—some of the demands cannot be met.

If political systems are to survive, they must be able to weather the dissatisfaction that can arise from unmet demands. One way of doing this is to make extensive use of force, which, despite the limitations we have noted, can be a satisfactory means for dealing with noncompliance in some circumstances. Other techniques of survival include, of course, diplomacy, intrigue, the manipulation of interest groups, *divide et impera*, and other devices that will be discussed presently. Another means of insuring survival is to have at least some of the aspects of the political system firmly grounded in the value system; that is, to give them legitimate foundations. If officials, statuses, and so on are legitimate, they are in a position to implement their decisions through the use of consensual power, and thus, even if they do not satisfy a particular demand at a particular time, the presumption will be that eventually they will do so. How long this delay of satisfaction can go on before the legitimacy itself is undermined is an empirical question, to be answered by individual societies, but if legitimacy can be maintained despite a political system's failure to satisfy political demands, the absence of other types of support will present no serious problem. This is related to another means; namely, building a "reserve of support" through previously met demands. In more colloquial terms, the memory of many past satisfactions can cushion the shock of resentment caused by current unmet demands.

#### PERSUASION AND INFLUENCE

Still another means of gaining compliance with decisions, despite the absence of demand satisfaction, is persuasion. Persuasion can bring about compliance by bringing about changes in belief and attitude. An obvious example of how this can work is through bringing a dissatisfied group to believe either that their demands "actually" have been met or that they "really" don't want what they originally thought they did.

Persuasion can operate through inducements ("If you people will go along with this decision, I'll see that you all get 40 acres and a mule"), through threats, and through pointing out that noncompliance is a violation of commitments ("When we achieved independence we all agreed to work for the good of the country, but now you say you don't want to cooperate"). It can also operate on the basis that the individual or group is persuaded that behaving in a certain way is a "good thing" for him. If the process is based solely on an appeal that is independent of inducements, threats, and the "activation of commitments," it is called "influence."

It is entirely possible for political decisions to be implemented by persuasion alone; thus officials can gain compliance with their decisions

without the use of power either in its consensual or coercive forms. When this is done through the use of influence alone, none of the techniques for compliance so far discussed need be involved: By "leadership," Parsons means gaining compliance through influence. In leadership, decisions are implemented, and support is won, through imparting the conviction that the decisions and support are in the best interests of those complying with the decisions and giving the support.

Without going into Parsons' elaborate discussion of the "influence" concept, we find it noteworthy that he views it as distinct from, but often involved with, power. This is particularly important for our theoretical purposes in that influence can be used to increase the amount of consensual power in a political system by increasing its scope. For example, some occupants of positions of authority try to convince their constituents that it would be a "good thing" for them to increase the demands they make upon the political system; then, through meeting these demands in a sufficiently reliable way, a new or further basis for legitimacy—and thus for consensual power—is established. The attempts of many new nation-states to eradicate tribalism and such tribal functions as the settlement of disputes can be looked upon as attempts to increase the consensual power of the national government and its officials through the process just indicated. One device that is utilized to this end is propaganda directed at convincing the citizens it would be better for them if the political functions they approve and desire were performed within the national rather than the tribal political community.

Of course, influence is not the only way in which the scope of a political system can be increased, since anything that brings new functions into a political system thereby increases its scope. However, increasing the scope of a system so as to add to its basis of consensual power is a more difficult task. To do this by means other than influence (for example, increasing the scope of the national government by eliminating tribal functions through coercion) is difficult, at least initially. This difficulty results because consensual power is based upon legitimacy, and, aside from the use of influence, it is not easy to increase the range of positive expectations (which form the base of legitimacy) without convincing the public that this increase is a "good thing" for them. As has been noted repeatedly, it is possible to operate on the basis of compliance-winning techniques that are divorced from legitimacy, but to do this is to decrease the flexibility and efficiency of a system. When increases in scope are won through influence, the decisions made in the new areas of operation will necessarily be supported by legitimacy, since by definition those affected by the decisions will have been brought to see that having decisions made in the remodeled system is a "good thing" for themselves.

The same basic argument obtains with respect to the use of influ-

ence to prevent dissatisfaction from arising from unmet demands. If, for example, those who are dissatisfied—feeling a decision was made that neglected their demands—can be brought to believe the decision was actually good for them, not only will general support be maintained in the system but also its legitimacy will not be called into question. These people could also be bribed or coerced into maintaining at least outward manifestations of support, but the effective use of influence would retain their positive evaluation of the system (or, at least, of some parts of the system).

Before we begin a more systematic examination of the concept of support it will be well to take a moment to review the basic points that pertain to gaining compliance. Three different techniques have been presented, which can be differentiated according to the factors that constitute their bases. The first technique is *force and coercion*, and the basis of this technique is its *intrinsic effectiveness*. In other words, this system requires less in the way of complexity in shared values and expectations than the other two; it depends, instead, upon a limitation or reduction of alternatives, so that, in the last resort (force), the choice of those who are to comply is between suffering physical discomfort and acquiescence. The second technique for gaining compliance we have called *consensual power*, and its effectiveness depends upon legitimacy. Compliance is exchanged for the understanding that, at some future time, the compliers will be able to gain favorable decisions from the power holders. The third major technique is *persuasion*, and it rests upon convincing the compliers that the best course to follow is the course that has been proposed to them. One form of persuasion, *influence*, involves bringing those who comply to believe that the course proposed to them is genuinely for their benefit. Influence is closely related to legitimacy, but another form of persuasion is based upon threats and bribes, and, like the first technique, depends upon its intrinsic effectiveness more than upon shared values.

#### TYPES OF SUPPORT

"Support," it will be remembered, is defined here as anything that contributes to the formulation and/or implementation of political ends. This is a very broad concept, which might profitably be divided into two types. The simple division presented here is made with the understanding that a particular action or sequence of interactions may be classified under more than one heading. The main purpose of the classification is to indicate what is meant by "anything that contributes," and the suggested division will serve to organize discussion of the various means through which support can be brought into a political system. The processes discussed in each category are intended to be indicative rather than exhaustive.



*Direct Support* This support is attached directly to some aspect of the political process, at any level; it is not mediated through an additional process or entity.

The most "primitive" type of support is that which is given to a decision for its own sake. Here the meeting of a demand leads to a positive evaluation of the decision that brought the fulfillment of the desire contained in the demand. This support does not *necessarily* lead to a more general type of support, and, when it does, the additional support belongs in the next category.

An official can acquire direct support in response to a decision or a series of decisions that he makes. This support may either be a very limited quid pro quo or a contribution to his positive evaluation, that is, legitimacy. Whether a particular decision leads to direct support for the maker of that decision, for the status he occupies, for the government or regime he represents, or even for the political community of which he is part, are empirical questions, to be established for each case. Support need not be attached directly to only one locus at a time, nor need it be attached directly to more than one.

Direct support need not arise only from a meeting of demands. It can result from identification, either in the psychological sense or in the sense of perceived identity of interests, and this process can be attached at one, or several, or all of the analytic levels. The same is true of legitimacy, which can be directly attached anywhere, but if it is to fit in this category it must result from the direct, positive evaluation of the locus in question. Viewing a status or government as legitimate because the occupants of the status or statuses meet one's expectations is direct support only for the officials who are positively evaluated, although this might lead to viewing other levels as legitimate.

Finally, coercion can be the source of direct support, bringing compliance with a decision through fear of the consequences of noncompliance or through eliminating the effective alternatives to compliance. Coercion, like the other bases for direct support, can be effective at all levels. It is perhaps most easily thought of as providing direct support for decisions, or officials, but there is no reason why this support cannot result from a realization of impotence in the face of the might of the authorities or from fear of the processes of the law (regime)—and thus attach directly to these loci.

*Indirect Support* In this category, support is mediated through an intervening entity or process or through a number of such. This intervening component, in turn, is attached to the political system, at one or at several levels. The category of indirect support is very inclusive and, indeed, embraces much behavior that is sometimes denied entry to orthodox examinations of politics.

The most obvious kinds of indirect support are those that result from direct support. Support can be given to a decision, and this may lead to support being given to the official who made the decision, the status he occupies, and so on. As we have noted, these may all be direct supports, simultaneously given, but not necessarily. Individuals may be explicit in supporting say, a headman *because* of the decisions he makes, but this is quite different from their direct support of both the decisions *and* the headman because, for example, both meet the individuals' values.

Indirect supports may result from involvement in nonpolitical processes and groups. For example, membership in a nonpolitical group may induce an individual to support a political official, decision, etc., in order to maintain his position in that group, and the same is true of subgroups (lineages, for example) in their relations with more inclusive groups (e.g., the tribe).

A related but perhaps less frequently considered source of indirect support is of a rather negative sort. Here involvement in a process originating in a nonpolitical group leads to demands on, and hence (under some circumstances) to support for the political system. For example, witchcraft accusations may arise within a nonpolitical group, a neighborhood, or a kin group, and this may result in the members' desire for a settlement. If a settlement is available only through political action, both the entire process behind the witchcraft accusations and the absence of a settlement procedure within the nonpolitical group provide indirect support for various levels of the political system. This support may be given only to the official who makes the settlement, but it may very well attach—simultaneously—to his status, the regime, and the political community.

Another important source of indirect support derives from the meanings and emotions that are associated with rites and symbols. The aroused feelings and beliefs can be associated with the various levels of the political system and can cause them to be positively evaluated. Clearly, the values and norms can themselves be viewed as sources of indirect support because it is through them that legitimacy is brought to politics. The same is true of the psychological processes by which evaluations are made, motivations focused, and desires formulated.

This, it might be objected, is casting too wide a net—including everything as a possible source of indirect support. While it can be argued that if everything is a possible source of support, there can be no analytic value in such a concept, it is difficult to see any harm in adopting such a permissive stance. Certainly, the disadvantages of a restricted outlook are obvious, and the wide scope of our position would commit the student of politics to an examination of virtually all aspects of behavior for their political implications, but there is nothing really new in

this. Our hope is that we have provided those who wish to study politics with conceptual equipment of a type that may encourage them to undertake such a wide examination.

#### IV

Much of the value of the concepts we have been discussing, consensual legitimacy, influence, types of support and the like, resides in their capacity to operate as conceptual tools for analyzing specific political behavior. To do this effectively, they have to relate to the conceptual frame already adumbrated, in which politics are regarded as spatial-temporal continua—not as harmoniously integrated and “timeless” systems. The course of political action, with its cumulative consequences, is by no means smooth from inception to terminus. Moreover, every terminus is a new beginning, though each beginning represents the result of an earlier phase of action or a set of linked and cumulating phases.

In the political process the concepts we have been examining—in their ideal purity and abstraction—become, as it were, fragmented and contaminated from their exposure to human interests, passions, and desires. Thus in the various studies of alien rule we clearly see how conflicting expectations in sectors of changing societies, with varying degrees of pluralism, make “legitimacy” impossible for the total system. Conflicting criteria of legitimacy are manipulated by different groups to secure their goals.

The closer we come to the political grass roots the closer we have to consider such “motivations” as self-interest and ambition, and the more we are obliged to show, in terms of detailed and extended case histories, the working out of the courses of action that are set in train by these and like impulsions. But the course of personal or sectional ambition or aggrandizement, like that of true love, seldom runs smoothly. Among the barriers, obstacles, and hazards are the ideals, norms, values, and supernatural beliefs that are characteristic of the society, whose intersection with the political system at certain critical points provides the culturally constituted bases of legitimacy.

To make an adequate analysis of a political continuum over time we must begin by selecting a point in time; but where we begin is a matter of particular strategy or convenience, not of theoretical necessity. We may attempt to characterize the properties of our chosen field when its component entities are at peace with one another, or when intrigue is rife among them, or at any phase of open struggle. All these modes of political behavior are “normal,” but it is perhaps tidier, and more convenient, to begin our study when the field components are at peace, or—in the popular mechanical analogy—in a state of rest or equilibrium. We must realize, when we do this, that the equilibrium we describe

represent a temporary truce rather than a uniquely "natural" or a "healthy" political state. Thus into our preliminary characterization of the field we must be careful to build an abridged report of the history of the relationships between its parts that adequately accounts for the current absence of overt conflict between them. All politics, as most recent writers on the subject would agree, will at some time in their course involve processes of conflict over the distribution, allocation, and use of public power.

The territorial range and social scope of a political field are conditioned by the nature and intensity of the interests of the affected parties. This means that a field's social circumference is extremely fluid, expanding and contracting over time in response to changes of interests, or to policies in regard to interests. We stress the relative quality of the concept "field" to offset the absolute or rigid quality imputed to concepts that have often dominated political thinking hitherto: "political system," "political structure," and "the governmental process."

In the diachronics of political field analysis, it is possible to arrest the flow of events at any given point in time and abstract a "still." We are then confronted by a set of co-existing parts that can be conceptualized as structured, or as having positions relative to each other, and therefore as occupying a type of space—analogous to Kurt Lewin's notion of the *life-space* of an individual. Although such a "still" deprives us of the time dimension, it allows us to enumerate, with some accuracy, the political entities engaged and the type, kind, and intensity of their interrelations, and to attempt to estimate the sources of support held by them severally or in varying combinations.

But this creates an erroneous impression of stability and balance. In fact, the passage of time always reveals instability and imbalance in power relations, although the extent of instability and the speed with which it will be revealed is highly variable among political fields. Some of the sources of instability may be ecological and demographic variations that affect the size and wealth of political units, psychological factors, such as differences in the need-dispositions regnant in various groups within the population at various times, and the effects of pressures and influences that originate outside the political field. To the degree that there is consensus about beliefs, values, and norms throughout the field, and to the degree that the field contains efficient institutions for resolving conflict, instability can be confined within roughly predictable limits. There may be recurrent or oscillant change within the limits of the system—as Leach so memorably demonstrated for the Kachin in *Political Systems of Highland Burma*—but in certain fields, including some of those now being considered by political anthropologists, normative consensus hardly exists (hence neither does a common standard of legitimacy). Peace-keeping machinery therefore tends to be based on coercion and

other intrinsically effective techniques rather than on consensual power.

The distinction made by M. G. Smith between "administration" and "politics," which he regards as two aspects of the wider category of "government," is not readily applicable to political fields of an intersocietal type. For Smith, administrative action consists "in the authorized processes of organization and management of the affairs of a given unit," and political action seeks to influence the decision of policy. "Policy decisions define a program of action, implicitly or otherwise. The execution and organization of this program is an administrative process." Smith's view of "power" is close to our view of "influence" and "persuasion." He conceives politics as a struggle for power, as he uses the term, within a governmental framework.

Behind this view lie the tacit assumptions of the equilibrium theory, the view that a political system is in a steady state through the balance of complementary forces. We think the distinction between "influence" and "power" is worth making (whether this be regarded as consensual power or as power based more directly on force) because power operates very differently from influence, both in how it is used (the means of its application) and in the consequences of its use. For example, it may be useful to distinguish interest groups that have influence but that have to operate through others that have power from power groups that need no intermediaries.

David Easton is closer to the empirical realities of politics when he defines political life as "a set of social interactions on the part of individuals and groups," but he seems to fall back into the structuralist trap when he goes on to distinguish political interactions from all other kinds of social interactions "in that they are predominantly oriented toward the *authoritative* [our emphasis] allocation of values for a society." Many political fields extend far beyond the frontiers of "a society";<sup>3</sup> and intersocietal struggles for power are waged between political groups that recognize no common "authority" and have little or no normative consensus. Furthermore, to equate "the political" with societal politics is to deprive us of a crucial means of understanding even the morphological distinctiveness of societal politics. It is often through their co-membership in an intersocietal political field that the societal components of that field, in ever shifting relationships of conflict and alliance, assume their specific political form.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Many do not, and the societal units, which are "parts" of such fields, enjoy varying degrees of independence within the field interdependence.

<sup>4</sup> We are aware, of course, that the field of "intersocietal" or "intertribal" or "international" politics is only one of a number of ways in which single politics take shape. Thus the resources of a whole society may be directed toward fulfillment of an economic program and a religious command—and these will powerfully affect the structures of administration "policy-action."

In a well-known instance, that of the political field constituted by the relationships between European and African societies involved in various ways in the West-Central African slave trade from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, we think it can be shown, though with no depth of historical evidence, that the "centralization" of some societies was dynamically related to the "decentralization" of others. One dominant interest—material profit—united a chain of societies of varying political types, but the differences between them were closely correlated with their economic and military roles in the trade cycle. The Portuguese on the coast were entrepreneurs, the Ovimbundu and Bangala were middlemen, the Chokwe and Luvale were middlemen and marauders, the Lunda and Luba, in the interior, were rulers and citizens of "gunpowder states," and the scattered populations around them formed loose and uncentralized polities, constantly raided by their centralized neighbors who made treaties with the middlemen. Such treaties or "contracts" guaranteed that rulers of gunpowder states would supply the middlemen with slaves, ivory, beeswax, and rubber in exchange for guns, powder, cloths, beads, and other trade goods. Equipped with firearms, those chiefs who were fortunate enough to have priority in negotiating contracts with middlemen (supplied in the first instance with guns and goods by coastal entrepreneurs) rapidly conquered their neighbors, extended their domains, developed hierarchically organized political systems of some complexity (based on tribute and pillage), and reduced their neighbors—including those who had a measure of centralization—almost to the status of wandering bands or assemblages of villages whose members were instantly ready to take to the bush to avoid capture.

Other long-range trading systems embraced similar political fields in West, East, and East-Central Africa. The "structure" of the political system in each component society of the trade circle can be adequately studied only after the society's position in the total political field related to the trade circle has been analyzed. The political structure of a society acquires a special character if its role in the trade is that of raider rather than raided, or mobile trader rather than fixed provider of depots. Other kinds of political centralization appear to have developed in connection with the need to provide security to traders. As Vansina, Mauny, and Thomas recently argued, in *The Historian in Tropical Africa*:

While political centralization may not have been indispensable for trade to develop and flourish, the development of trade itself in some areas favored the creation of centralized political systems. And these in turn contributed in a large measure to the further development of trade by providing organization and security for markets and caravans.

Such considerations lead us to suggest that, despite its heuristic value during the period when anthropologists did fieldwork in societies under

colonial and "indirect" rule, Radcliffe-Brown's synchronic frame of theory is no longer adequate. The appropriate field of anthropological study today is, in M. G. Smith's words, "a unit over time, not merely a unit at a particular point in time." What we have called a political field is not necessarily a closely integrated system, but a spatial-temporal continuum with some systematic features. The parts of such a unit, under specified conditions, may exhibit varying degrees and kinds of interdependence, both institutionalized and contingent. Under different conditions, however, the same parts may operate, as it were, "out of mesh" with, and independently of, other parts of the continuum. When the parts of a single society are working with and against one another in regard to some policy issue, we may speak of "political behavior."

Behavior *within* the independent parts that relates to such processes as decision-making or conflict resolution, and that involves the use of or struggle for power (in its broadest sense), may be defined (in Easton's useful phrase) as "parapolitical behavior"—although there is a danger of introducing an overly static emphasis into our analysis if we do not do this with caution. Some types of intrasocietal behavior, which are oriented to conflicts of interests or competitions for power, can properly be described as "political" if they relate to the boundary-maintaining mechanisms of *whole* societies (for example, if the tribal council should be dissolved and all affairs handled by the national government), if they agitate issues that bear on the welfare (or even the survival) of *whole* societies, and if they provide sets of goals that involve all the parts of a society in coordinated action. Thus, viewed dynamically, and in terms of the spatial-temporal continuum model, "parapolitical behavior" may change into "political behavior," and vice versa—depending upon circumstances, upon the nature of the issues and goals situationally paramount, or upon the structural perspective employed.

Ideally, or properly speaking, we should not be studying a "field" (in Lewin's interpretation) because Lewin's field theory deals only with the *contemporaneous* situation as causative of behavior. For him, past events have only indirect influence as the origins of the present field, but, because they have ceased to exist, he holds that they cannot be considered active in the situation under study. This view closely resembles Radcliffe-Brown's notion of the synchronic analysis of a social system, conceptualized as "the network of actually existing social relationships."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The synchronic view simply does not present an adequate conception of what is "past." If we say that we are interested in explaining state *x*, and if we grant that *x* is the result of a series of phases *a*, *b*, *c* . . . *n*, it is difficult to argue against the view that insists that all we need is complete understanding of *n* to explain *x*, since *a*, *b*, *c*, etc., will have made their contributions to *n*, and need be examined only *there*. But if we conceptualize the causality not as merely linear but as cumulative (with the "accumulation" occurring in the personalities, structures, and meaning systems), *x* may be regarded as the result of *a'*, *b'*, *c'* . . . *n'*, acting jointly to

Our diachronic method of analysis, however, examines changes in the relationship between significant parts of the preliminary situation (which may be described as a field) over time, in a succession of phases. It is our view that these phases tend to follow one another in a processual pattern. Different kinds of political fields generate different kinds of patterns; nevertheless, one kind of pattern is of wide generality. Both at the level of intersocietal power struggles (for territory, monopoly of trade, or spheres of influence) and at the level of intrasocietal factional struggles, a patterned sequence of phases tends to occur, though it must be stressed that the course of action may be arrested during any of the phases. We indicate the full pattern below, though in specific instances it may never be completed.

#### (1) MOBILIZATION OF POLITICAL CAPITAL

In this preliminary phase the groups and persons ("parts of the field") laying claim to leading roles in the anticipated struggle will attempt, during a period of external peace or truce, to maximize support of all types, or, in different terms, to mobilize their political capital. In pursuit of this goal they utilize such "internal" techniques as influence, intrigue, diplomacy, bluff, bribery, activation of commitments, threats of resort to force, and promises of rewards for support, and such "external" techniques as lobbying, present patronage, conspiracy, subversion, the acquisition of wealth, peaceful infiltration of the antagonists' ranks, espionage, and innumerable other devices, maneuvers, and intrigues (*a*) to build up their ranks and resources and (*b*) to deplete those of their anticipated adversaries. It seems to be characteristic of this phase that influence and the various other forms of persuasion are important within factions, and attempts to undermine the opposition's support through all available means are important externally.

#### (2) THE ENCOUNTER OR "SHOWDOWN"

(*A*) *Breach of the Peace* When one of the major parties to the conflict thinks it has acquired (whether realistically or delusorily) a decisive advantage in support, it decides to precipitate a crisis. Characteristically, it either provokes its antagonist to an intemperate action, or it takes the initiative in breaking the public peace. But perhaps this is stating the matter too strongly, for it is often sufficient if one party puts its rival in an embarrassing position, or puts itself in a favorable light at its rival's expense. In many cases the competitive accumulation of support is enough to produce multiple tensions in the relationships between parts

produce *x*. To explain *a'* (the "accumulation"), we must examine *a*, which is the past event itself, but even if we do not concern ourselves with the genesis of *a'* we will be led to examine the production of past *x*'s to discern a pattern of *x* production, i.e., into "cross-temporal" studies.



of the field, of a sort and intensity that result in a spontaneous eruption of overt hostility between the rival parties.

Under favorable conditions the investigator will be able to make a crude assessment of the strength of support of the respective parties. This assessment would involve the investigation of the locus and extent of support, the mechanisms for obtaining control of resources, and such questions as "Who uses what mechanisms to get what support from where?" Robert Bierstedt's formulation that power "would seem to stem from three sources: (1) numbers of people, (2) social organization, and (3) resources" may be of help here.

Majorities, for Bierstedt, constitute "a residual locus of social power," and organization and discipline constitute another (so that an organized minority may control an unorganized majority); and access to the greater resources will confer superior power on a group otherwise equal in numbers and comparable in organization with its rivals. "Resources" are of many kinds, including part of the broader categories we would call direct and indirect support—"money, property, prestige, knowledge, competence, deceit, fraud, secrecy, and, of course, all of the things usually included under the term 'natural resources' . . . there are also supernatural resources in the case of religious associations, which, as agencies of a celestial government, apply supernatural sanctions as instruments of control."

Supernatural sanctions may be manipulated as power resources, and one type of activity undertaken by an official can become a source of power to be used in other types of official activity. Bierstedt points out that although the factors just mentioned are not themselves "power," they may be considered "sources of power" in situations of conflict. We would prefer to call them "types of support," but, at any rate, their relative distributions can be plotted in relation to the alignment of factions at the outset of a struggle. It would also be useful to distinguish between "the inside view" of the contending parties—how they might estimate their chances of success—and the "outside view" of the investigator—whose aim is to make a construct of the total constellation of elements and their interrelations in the "field."

(B) *Crisis* Breach of the peace is usually heralded or signaled by breaching a norm that is considered binding on *all* members of the political field. It may not be a political or legal norm; indeed, it is often an ethical norm that assumes political value as it is reinterpreted by the contending parties, especially with regard to "legitimacy." Examples of breaches of an ethical norm are failure to observe a critical caste or kinship rule, deliberate flouting of a religious interdiction, unauthorized trespass on another's territory, and the breaking of a marital norm (such as Henry VIII's divorce of Catherine of Aragon). The murder of Archduke Ferdinand at Sarajevo in 1914 by a Serbian fanatic was a breach of

norm that precipitated the First World War—essentially a struggle between two blocs of major powers. Whatever the nature of the breach, it may serve as a pretext—at a given level of tension in a political field—to initiate an encounter between rival power-seekers.

Breach of such a norm leads more or less rapidly to “crisis”—which may be defined as a momentous juncture or turning point in the relations between components of a political field—at which apparent peace becomes overt conflict and covert antagonisms become visible. External crises may be used (through the internal employment of mechanisms of the types referred to above) to solidify support. Power crises sooner or later take a dichotomous form, and the field as a whole becomes what Bailey has called an “arena,” in which the contenders are ultimately arrayed in two camps or two factions.

Many subgroup rivalries may have existed prior to the crisis; afterwards, these rivalries are suspended until the resolution or denouement of the crisis, or they are “fed into” the alliances that are centered on the two major factions. In our terminology it is frequently the function of persuasion and influence to involve these minor matters in the major matter.

(C) *Countervailing Tendencies* Gluckman has argued, with much supportive documentation, that radical cleavage—especially within a society or community—is restrained and perhaps stopped before it really begins by the fact that “customary forms first divide and then reunite men.”

Men quarrel in terms of certain of their customary allegiances, but are restrained from violence through other conflicting allegiances which are also enjoined on them by custom. The result is that conflicts in one set of relationships over a wider range of society or through a longer period of time, lead to the reestablishment of social cohesion. Conflicts are a part of social life and custom appears to exacerbate these conflicts; but in doing so custom also restrains the conflicts from destroying the wider social order.

Gluckman’s argument is particularly applicable to small-scale, weakly centralized or uncentralized societies in which subgroups are multifunctional and most relationships are multiplex; that is, in a “legitimate political community,” especially where there is a “legitimate regime.” In societies that are marked by a relatively high degree of division of labor and socioeconomic stratification, and by the development of many single-interest associational groups and complex hierarchical administrative bureaucracies, criss-crossing conflicts are less likely to prove eufunctional in terms of pansocietal cohesion. As Coser has noted:

Not *every* type of conflict is likely to benefit group structure, nor can conflict subserve such functions [of establishing unity or reestablishing unity and co-

hesion where it has been threatened by hostile and antagonistic feelings among the members] for *all* groups: whether social conflict is beneficial to internal adaptation or not depends on the type of issues over which it is fought as well as on the type of social structure within which it occurs. . . . Internal social conflicts which concern goals, values or interests that do not contradict the basic assumptions upon which the relationship is founded tend to be positively functional for the social structure. . . . Internal conflicts in which the contending parties no longer share the basic values upon which the legitimacy of the social system rests threaten to disrupt the structure.

Consensus in small-scale societies, with what Durkheim calls "mechanical solidarity," tends to be religiously based and periodically reinforced by rites. This is less likely to be the case in large-scale societies, with contracted religious domains, and it is even less likely in the political fields formed by intersocietal relations—especially where religious divisions exist. Relations are characterized by a major focus on the mobilization of internal support rather than by concern with such bases of common support as joint interests and shared values.

Nevertheless, multiple cross-cutting conflicts of loyalty and allegiance (if there is agreement on basic values) tend to inhibit the development of dichotomous cleavage. The role of many religious systems in relation to political struggles is to legitimate and posit the final mystical unity of *all* customs, however discrepant they may be, that control social relationships. Thus customs that thrust men into conflicting allegiances rest on common religious axioms and on the societal consensus these generate. Where several societies, brought into political relationships in a single field by a crucial issue, share a single set of religious beliefs, the resultant situation is likely to be analogous to that within a single uncentralized society, and to share its crucial property of possessing conflicting customary allegiances. Religious authorities can here be appealed to as arbiters, as in medieval Europe, when pope and church played this role. But this leads us to the next phase in the progress of a power struggle.

(D) *Deployment of Adjustive or Redressive Mechanisms* This process consists of the deployment of various redressive and adjustive mechanisms to seal off or heal the breach, and these mechanisms may range from "personal and informal arbitration to formal and legal machinery, and, to resolve certain kinds of crisis, to the performance of public ritual." Here, too, influence and other techniques for building a "legitimate case" are important. Turner has tried to classify some types of situations in which these and other procedures are brought into operation. He suggests that jural machinery (involving a judicial process) is employed when parties appeal to common norms, or, if norms are in conflict, when they can appeal to "a common frame of values which organize a society's norms in a hierarchy." On the other hand, when a

group feels itself to be in conflict with social norms, because of the working out of social processes that conflict with one another, this produces disputes where "judicial decision can condemn one or more of the disputants, but . . . cannot relieve the quarrels so as to preserve the threatened relationships." These are, in fact, the conditions that in many parts of the primitive world provoke accusations of sorcery and witchcraft against one of the parties, or divinations of ancestral wrath, of breach of taboo, or of curses. These charges also follow the occurrence of natural misfortunes, especially in times of social crisis.

Gluckman has recently taken up this argument about the nature of the distinction between judicial and ritual-divinatory types of adjustive and redressive procedure. "It would also be better to keep these types distinct, even where we are dealing with tribes which do not have anything like an established judicial process."

Redressive mechanisms may be further differentiated according to whether the crises they seek to resolve occur in intra- or intersocietal fields of political relationships. Where crises cannot be resolved in constituted courts of law, and where recourse cannot be made to ritual means of redress—as is frequently the case when conflict occurs between sovereign polities or highly autonomous subgroups within a polity—recourse may be made to the intervention of a third party, or group of parties, with the object of proposing a compromise. This often happens when there is approximate parity of political capital and resources between the contending parties.

If the decision of the third party *must* be accepted, we may speak of "arbitration," with the implication that the decision of the arbitrator is underwritten either by strong legal or strong religious sanctions. If negotiations are conditioned on voluntary acceptance by both contestants of the settlement proposed by the third party, we may speak of "mediation." Mediation involves the sustained intervention of the mediator, who must be concerned with more than the legal issues at stake and must utilize a variety of pragmatic techniques—ranging from friendly advice and pressure to formulations of new terms—to bring about a reconciliation of the interests of the opposed parties. In intersocietal disputes, a mediator is often a person of high status or repute who frequently occupies a position in the political field of the contenders but has no direct interest in the issues that embroil them.

In other situations we may speak of "intermediaries" rather than mediators—when neither party will accept the third party's claim to be impartial. In such an instance the possibility of an outbreak of overt hostility is so strong that negotiation has to proceed between intermediaries who represent each party, since a face-to-face confrontation of the faction leaders is not possible or practical.

In this fourth phase of power struggles in political continua, vari-

ous mechanisms of redress—jural, ritual, arbitral, etc.—may be tried in order to produce a settlement or to restore the semblance of a peaceful state of relationships so that individuals and groups may once again pursue their ordinary lives and nonpolitical goals. In radically changing societies, however—as Siegel and Beals have shown—traditional redressive machinery may become inadequate for coping with new types of conflict in altered patterns of relationships; and society may remain in a state of “pervasive factionalism” that cannot be resolved. In less drastic situations of change, notably in societies under colonial control or with newly independent governments, traditional tribal mechanisms, unable to fulfill their conflict-resolving functions, may be gradually (sometimes rapidly) replaced by the formal administrative procedures of conflict resolution imposed or instituted by the central government.

(E) *Restoration of Peace* When redressive mechanisms operate effectually, they lead either to a reestablishment of relations between the contending parties or to a social recognition of irreparable schism. But if the continuum is now analyzed synchronically, as a political field, and is compared with the political field that preceded the power struggle, many changes will usually be visible. As likely as not, the scope and range of the field will have altered; the number of its parts will be different; and their size will be different.

More importantly, the nature and intensity of the relations between parts, and the structure of the total field, will have changed. Oppositions will have become alliances, and vice versa. Asymmetric relations will have become symmetric relations. High status will have become low status and vice versa. New power will have been channeled into new authority and old authority defenestrated. Closeness will have become distance, and vice versa. Formerly integral parts will have segmented; formerly independent parts will have fused. Some parts will no longer belong to the field, and others will have entered it. Institutionalized relationships will have become informal; social regularities will have become irregularities. New norms will have been generated during the attempts to redress conflict; old norms will have fallen into disrepute.

The bases of support will be found to have altered. Some field components will have less support, others more, still others will have fresh support, and some will have none. The distribution of the factors of legitimacy will have changed, as have the techniques for gaining compliance.

Yet, through all these changes, certain crucial norms and relationships—and others less crucial—will persist. The explanation of both constancy and change can be found only by systematic diachronic analysis, by investigating the spatial-temporal continuum in terms not only of its synchronic divisions but also of its diachronic phases. Each phase has its

specific properties, and each phase leaves its stamp on the structure of social relations in the political process.

The processual unit, and its phase structure, which we have just discussed, has affinities with Bales's "phase movement," but it differs from the latter in that it is heavily invested with institutionalized roles, relationships, and mechanisms; and it is an inference from anthropological and sociological observational data rather than from a series of controlled experiments. In specific societies, moreover, such processual units may never reach the climax posited here. Thus successful persuasion in phase A may result in one party's securing the allegiance of the entire "public"—in which case there will be no "encounter." And, very frequently, traditional redressive and conciliatory machinery (phase D) prove inadequate in coping with new kinds of issues and problems, and with new roles and statuses. Conflict becomes endemic, or recourse is made to new types of machinery.

As a third alternative, in formerly tribal or village polities, the participants may (for the first time) invoke the legal institutions of the wider political system: its courts, police, penal sanctions, judicial processes, etc., or, under certain circumstances, its ritual institutions.

We propose to call the unit of political action a "political phase development"—to bring out its cumulative character—or, in short, "phase development." The unit's structure is such that it is equally applicable to factional struggles in Indian and African villages and to major international "trouble cases," such as the Suez and Cuban crises. Its temporal segmentation is highly flexible because each phase may vary considerably in duration vis-à-vis the others—though there is a tendency for most political communities to act swiftly to seal off crises by the application of redressive machinery.

We are aware, of course, that the phase development is essentially oriented to conflict, and that other types of political processes may lean to cooperation, but we believe that only rarely does policy action escape conflict. Conflict is covert if not open, and, in the pluralistic and changing societies now studied by anthropologists, even administrative action tends to result in conflict.

Finally, phase developments are of variable duration and social span. Moreover, some types lead to the restoration of the status quo. Although this is true mostly for the smaller units in a political field, it must be added that the relational structure observable at the climax of a small-scale phase development is seldom the replica of the structure when the breach occurred. Rather, the total development may be regarded as a phase in a longer and broader development—that of the total political community whose structure is cumulatively changed by the small climactic increments it receives from each small-scale development. Other types of phase development are signs and instruments of changes in basic

social relations. By the use of this device or formula we believe that greater depth and clarity can be achieved in the study of changing systems, for each phase in a development has its own characteristics and each sociocultural system leaves its imprint on those characteristics. Thus each society has its cultural solutions to political crises—and indeed its own definition of what constitutes “crisis.” Each society also has its own style of conflict resolution.

Processual studies of politics are still at an early stage—at the point of breach from earlier analytical norms! One aim of this book is to take tentative steps toward resolving the developing crisis by investigating the structure of political action revealed in empirical data. Within the general framework of political dynamics that we have used, subordinate processes—such as decision-making, the judicial process, the agitation and settlement of policy issues, the application of sanctions, the resolution of disputes, etc.—find their appropriate places as components of phases in the major sequence.

## 27 Law and Anthropology



E. Adamson Hoebel

THE INTRODUCTION TO THIS ARTICLE IN THE FIRST EDITION OF THE *Readings* made a major point of the rareness of Professor Hoebel's interest and expertise in the anthropology of law. Because Hoebel's viewpoint is still a dominant one in the field and because it is a felicitous summary of some of the main problems and approaches, it was a simple decision to retain it. But that introduction had to go.

It is already evident from the previous selection (II:26) that deep concern with legal institutions and aspects of culture exists among many anthropologists. Hoebel has been joined by many others, including Paul Bohannan, Leopold Pospisil, Laura Nader, although some of those who have entered this field more recently express various disagreements.

Hoebel's position may be described generally as middle-of-the-road, although it would take an article to clearly express exactly what this means in terms of anthropological jurisprudence. He does not hesitate to recognize the significance of the use of force or the threat of force to establish legal order, but he is inclined to regard the state as synonymous with political organization. In the latter regard he sees the difference

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The author (b. 1906) is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Minnesota. He has done both archeological and ethnographic fieldwork and is a specialist on the Plains Indians. Among his books are *The Cheyenne Way* (with K. N. Llewellyn, 1941), *The Law of Primitive Man* (1954), *The Archaeology of Bone Cave, Miller County, Missouri* (1946), *The Cheyennes* (1960), and *Anthropology: The Study of Man* (1966).



between primitive and modern societies as primarily a matter of degree rather than kind. For him, law and the state are foreshadowed on the simplest cultural levels. There is another view (II:28), but, while acknowledging the complexity of the problem, it seems fair to say that Hoebel's view is that most widely accepted in current American anthropology.

*It is perfectly proper to regard and study the law simply as a great anthropological document.*

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

# I

If the integration of law and anthropology is to flourish, it must be on a truly functional basis. Each must contribute to the dynamics of the other; each must add to the operative effectiveness of the other; each must nourish the other as a process. Mere static comparison, a paralleling of civilized rules of law with selected examples from sundry primitive tribes, is a sterile accomplishment. It may pique the curiosity and it may amuse; if done with sufficient coverage, it may even make a limited contribution to the understanding of the core and limits of law in human affairs. But jurisprudence as a part of the study of man cannot be content to deal with static juridical tidbits served up for exhibition as ethnological *curiosa*. Both the lawyer and the jurist are much too busy with the daily grist of their humming mills to give more than scant attention to what the anthropologist has to say unless anthropology is patently offering something of dynamic and vital significance for their use.

The reason for the "If" with which this discussion has been opened rests in the fact that the integration of law and anthropology on a broad scale is still more a goal to be striven for rather than an accomplished fact. In projecting this symposium it was wisely observed that the day had passed when the social anthropologist and the lawyer could afford to treat each other as foreigners. Each is dealing with different aspects of the same questions, and society can no longer afford to have either ignore the learning and experience of the other if we are to solve the complex problems of modern civilization. The day has indeed passed when anthropologists and lawyers can afford to ignore each other. But why, when distinctive progress has been made between others of the social sciences, have law and anthropology lagged in the union of their forces?

We can place the remissness of anthropologists to two conditions: (1) a misconception (or non-conception) of the nature of law; and (2) a failure to set realistic and genuine problems for their attack in the field of jurisprudence.

The lawyer, on his part, is to a great degree responsible for the an-

thropologist's failure to understand the nature of law. There has been too much parochialism among the men of law. Their craft is amazingly shielded behind a curtain of technical jabberwocky. It is parochialism which sets up a conception of law in terms of the specialized characteristics of law in western civilization. Craft secrecy and traditional disregard of the purpose of the law have induced among our lawyers a disinclination to reduce the problems, the functions, the nature of the raw materials and their processing to simplicity and clarity with which nonspecialists can cope. Historians of law and analytical jurisprudes have told us, for instance, that nothing so refined and sophisticated, as authoritarian and well-organized, nothing so purposeful as is the law could exist on the primitive level. Almost all anthropologists have placidly accepted this viewpoint, and the legal life of primitive man has been treated less as unexplored than as non-existent. This, we may say, is a tribute to the prestige and awe with which law and the students of law are held, for anthropologists as a tribe are otherwise a skeptical and inquiring lot.

In order to rationalize their neglect of law in the study of primitive society, a number of anthropologists have turned to an exaltation of custom. "Custom is King," they cry. Custom is everything. Either there is no law, because custom takes care of everything and the savage is its automatic slave, or law is by a strange act of sophistry merged in mere custom. In either event, law as a distinct social phenomenon does not then exist in primitive society. Says the English anthropologist, E. Sidney Hartland, who has written a book on primitive law, "Primitive law is in truth the totality of the customs of the tribe." In concurrence, his compatriot Driberg echoes: ". . . law comprises all those rules of conduct which regulate the behavior of individuals and communities. . . ." A typical American declaration on the same subject is that of J. P. Gillin who said that law broadly considered is simply that body of opinion which regulates the behavior of the members of a group.

Not unsymptomatic of this anthropological attitude are the Lynds' famous Middletown studies of 1929 and 1937, introduced by Professor Clark Wissler as the first application of the methods of social anthropology to a contemporary American community: a study of "the whole round of its activities." And yet, of this social anthropology of the whole round of an American community, Karl Llewellyn observed with wry cogency: "the legal aspects of behavior there did not seem worth canvass—or capable thereof."

Outside of America, notably in Germany, serious attempts have been made to bring anthropology to bear on the problems of law. A German school of ethnological jurisprudence under the leadership of Kohler, Post and Steinmetz flourished during the last decade of the past century and the first quarter of the present. It brought forth a mountain of mate-

rials in the *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft*, laid down its principles in Post's *Grundriss der Ethnologischen Jurisprudenz* and Steinmetz's *Ethnologische Studien zur Ersten Entwicklung der Strafe*, and produced finally a bulky set of monographic reports on the native law of the erstwhile German colonies.

Unfortunately, the chief concern of this prodigious effort was to devise systems of legal "evolution" on the basis of sets of assumed premises that prove untenable in the light of empirical anthropology. The Germanic efforts were devoid of dynamic analysis of the juridical process or the functions of legal interrelations. Consequently, little impress was made on anthropology, outside the involuting circle of German ethnologists, and scarcely any impress on law anywhere.

The enormous contributions of the Dutch to law and anthropology are somewhat different. The Dutch legal and anthropological scholars actually lead the world in the study of primitive law both qualitatively and quantitatively. Their research in the *adat* (custom) law of the Netherlands East Indies runs into hundreds of published volumes. But it is all in Dutch—a marginal language read by no more than a handful of non-Dutch social scientists and lawyers. The Dutch have gone far in the integration of law and anthropology because they have used their first-hand knowledge of native law as an active base for the legal administration of the native village communities. These communities are inhabited by fully ninety-five percent of the population of Indonesia. The interest of the Dutch has been at once practical and scholarly (as legal studies ought to be). There is much we could learn from the Dutch if more of us would learn to read their language or if they would put more of their findings into a less exotic tongue. Nevertheless, their legal anthropology suffers several shortcomings. They have arbitrarily limited their studies by the artificial boundaries of the Netherlands East Indies: a negative consequence of their administrative interest. They are over-interested in systematization, as may well be expected from jurists trained in continental civil law. They are little concerned with process and the social psychology of law or with the theory of law as a social science.

## 2

To seek a definition of law is like the quest for the Holy Grail. We can readily lend a sympathetic ear to Max Radin, who with well-seasoned wisdom warns us that: "Those of us who have learned humility have given over the attempt to define law." However, for law and anthropology to cross-fertilize, there must be some recognized common denominator in primitive law and modern law to serve as a starting point. Law, viewed from the modern position of social science (not from that

of the lawyer in court), is simply a specialized machinery of social control: a complex of certain kinds of human behavior. The question is: *what* kinds of behavior? What kind of machinery of social control in societies differently organized from ours corresponds significantly to that which we call law in our own? It is here that modern jurisprudence makes its basic contribution.

There is a strange notion prevalent among many anthropologists that the field worker going out to study a primitive culture must have no preconceptions about social institutions for fear that he may warp the behavior of the primitives into a mold cast in the image of preconceptions taken from our civilization. He has seen how the early Spanish recorders made a Catalonian monarchy of the Aztec empire when in fact it was something quite different. He knows how easy it is to phrase primitive property concepts in terms of our framework when the property institutions of the primitives may have an entirely different quality. He fears that if he has *any* preconceptions about legal institutions, he may find himself seeing and phrasing primitive law in terms of our modern experience and not in terms of the primitives'. As a canon of method the kernel of this caution is eminently sound. A social science has always to struggle to keep the biases and cultural compulsives of its formulators under strict control. But the flowering of this germ into a rejection of all preconceptions is a rank weed of noxious quality. Without "preconceptions," *i.e.*, hypotheses, properly shaped and properly used, a scientist has no tools with which to work. He cannot "see" for he cannot organize, interpret or test what he does see. Specifically, if he has no idea as to what constitutes law, he will be unable to see law. He should not forget that the very reason anthropologists are able to draw attention to much in primitive society that misses the eye of the ordinary layman is just because they have already learned a good deal of what to expect and look for before they ever visit a primitive society in the field.

If, then, it is imperative that we have a suitable conception of what may constitute law or be significant in relation to law, we may properly put the question: what is it that makes law law?

It is not legislation despite contrary notions of typical code-trained European lawyers. Most primitive law is not legislated, and modern sociological jurisprudence and legal realism from Holmes down have made it perfectly clear that much of modern law is not legislated either. English jurisprudence has long since given assent to this point of view, as witness the remarks by Salmond: "But all law, however made, is recognized and administered by the Courts, and no rules are recognized by the Courts which are not rules of law. It is therefore to the Courts and not to the Legislature that we must go in order to ascertain the true nature of Law." The now classic formulation of this concept of the na-

ture of law is Cardozo's statement that law is "a principle or rule of conduct so established as to justify a prediction with reasonable certainty that it will be enforced by the courts if its authority is challenged."

This behavioristic concept of law gives the anthropologist a handle he can grasp, but it is still not enough. For if we think of courts in our traditional manner, *i.e.*, a formal sitting of professional judges, with bailiffs, clerks and advocates, we must conclude: no courts, no law. This is what bothered Max Radin who well understands the anthropologist's problem and, perhaps, led him to assert: "But there is an infallible test for recognizing whether an imagined course of conduct is lawful or unlawful. This infallible test, in our system, is to submit the question to the judgment of a court. In other systems exactly the same test will be used, but it is often difficult to recognize the court. None the less, although difficult, it can be done in almost every system at any time." Max Radin is right. But what sort of courts does he have in mind? Some courts are difficult to identify. Anthropologically, they may be regularly constituted tribal courts such as the tribal council of an American Indian pueblo sitting in judicial capacity, or a court of the West African Ashanti, constituted of the chief, his council of elders and henchmen.

That type of primitive court is not hard to recognize. Any member of the American Bar Association would readily see it for what it is. But a more obscure type of "court" may be found in the Cheyenne Indian military society. Consider the case of Wolf Lies Down, whose horse was "borrowed" by a friend in the absence of the owner. When the friend did not return from the war path with the horse, Wolf Lies Down put the matter before his society—the Elk Soldiers. "Now I want to know what to do," he said. "I want you to tell me the right thing." The society chiefs sent a messenger to bring the friend in from the camp of a remote band. The friend gave an adequate and acceptable explanation of his conduct and offered handsome restitution to the complainant in addition to making him his blood brother. Then said the chiefs: "Now we have settled this thing." But they went on, half as a legislature: "Now we shall make a new rule. There shall be no more borrowing of horses without asking. If any man takes another's goods without asking, we will go over and get them back for him. More than that, if the taker tries to keep them, we will give him a whipping." Can any one deny that the Elk Soldiers were in effect sitting as a court for the entire tribe? The test is first, one of responsibility. That they knew. It is second, one of effective authority. That they achieved. It is third, one of method. Unhampered by a system of formal precedent which "required" them to judge according to the past, they *recognized* that the rule according to which they were settling this case was *new*, and so announced it.

Among the Yurok Indians of California, as typical of a less specifically organized people, the "court" was less definite but it was neverthe-

less there. An aggrieved Yurok who felt he had a legitimate claim engaged the services of two non-relatives from a community other than his own. The defendant did likewise. These persons were called "crossers" because they crossed back and forth between the litigants. The litigants did not face each other in the dispute. After hearing all that each side offered in evidence and argument, the "crossers" rendered a judgment on the facts. If the judgment was for the plaintiff, they rendered a decision for damages according to a well-established scale that was known to all. For their footwork and efforts each received a piece of shell currency called a "moccassin." Here again we have a court.

On an even more primitive level, if an aggrieved party or his kinsmen must institute and carry through the prosecution without the intervention of a third party, there will still be a "court" if the proceedings follow the lines of recognized and established order—there will be then at least the compulsion of recognized "legal" procedure, though the ultimate court may be the "bar of public opinion." When vigorous public opinion recognizes and accepts the procedure of the plaintiff as correct and the settlement or punishment meted out as sound, and the wrongdoer in consequence accedes to the settlement because he feels he must yield, then the plaintiff and his supporting public opinion constitute a rudimentary sort of "court," and the procedure is inescapably "legal."

Consider the Eskimo dealing with recidivist homicide. Killing on a single occasion merely leads to feud, inasmuch as the avenger enjoys no recognized privilege of imposing the death penalty on the murderer or his kinsman with immunity against a counter killing. A feud, of course, is an absence of law, since blood revenge is more a sociological law than a legal one. But to kill someone on a second occasion makes the culprit a public enemy in the Eskimo view. It then becomes incumbent upon some public spirited man of initiative to interview all the adult males of the community to determine whether they agree that he should be executed. If unanimous consent is given, he then undertakes to execute the criminal, and no revenge may be taken on him by the murderer's relatives. Cases show that no revenge is taken. A community "court" has spoken. Such are the kinds of courts Max Radin has in mind.

Although courts in this sense exist in most primitive societies, insistence on the concept of courts is not really necessary for the determination of law. The really fundamental *sine qua non* of law in any society is the legitimate use of physical coercion. The law has teeth, and teeth that can bite, although they need not be bared. For as Justice Holmes put it: "The foundation of jurisdiction is physical power, although in civilized times it is not necessary to maintain that power throughout proceedings properly begun. . . ." We would merely add to that declaration that it was not necessary to limit the latency of power to civilized times; primitive men often found that it was not necessary

to display the power behind the law when the defendant acceded to proceedings carried through properly. And Jhering has emphasized the factor of force in law, "Law without force is an empty name." Again more poetically we find, "A legal rule without coercion is a fire that does not burn, a light that does not shine." In this we agree.

But force in law has a special meaning. Force means coercion, which in its absolute form is physical compulsion. There are, of course, as many forms of coercion as there are forms of power, and only certain methods and forms are legal. Coercion by gangsters is not legal. Even physical coercion by a parent is not legal if it is extreme in form. The essentials of legal coercion are general acceptance of the application of physical power, in threat or in fact, by a privileged party, for a legitimate cause, in a legitimate way, and at a legitimate time. This distinguishes the sanction of law from other social rules.

The privilege of applying force constitutes the "official" element in law. He who is generally or specifically recognized as rightly exerting the element of physical coercion is a splinter of social authority. It is not necessary that he be an official with legal office or a constable's badge. In any primitive society the so-called "private prosecutor" of a private injury is implicitly a public official *pro tempore, pro eo solo delicto*. He is not and cannot be acting solely on his own, his family's or his clan's behalf and yet enjoy the approval or tacit support of the disinterested remainder of his society. If the rest of the tribal population support him in opinion, even though not in overt action, it can only mean that the society feels that the behavior of the defendant was wrong in its broadest implications, *i.e.*, *contra* to the standards of the society as a whole. Thus it is in itself an injury to the society, although the group feeling may not be strong enough to generate overt and specific action by the group as a group and on its own initiative. Yet the private prosecutor remains the representative of the general social interest as well as that which is specifically his own. This fundamental fact is ordinarily ignored in discussions of primitive law, and it is in this sense that we may say that the difference between criminal law and private law is a difference in degree rather than in kind, though there can be doubt that some matters touch the general interest in fact and feeling much more vigorously than others in primitive law, as for example, sacrilege, homicidal tendencies, and, frequently, treason.

These observations are not intended to deny the usefulness of our modern concept of criminal as against private law. Those concepts are of the greatest value in reaching an understanding of a difference in emphasis that tends to pervade the law of primitive societies as compared to the more highly organized legal systems of civilizations. Private law predominates on the primitive scene.

A third explicit feature of law is regularity. Regularity is what law

in the legal sense has in common with law in the scientific sense. Regularity, it must be warned, does not mean absolute certainty. There can be no true certainty where human beings enter. Yet there is much regularity, for all society is based on it. In law, the doctrine of precedent is not the unique possession of the Anglo-American common law jurist. As we shall see, primitive law also builds on precedents, for there new decisions rest on old rules of law or norms of custom and new decisions which are sound tend to supply the foundation of future action.

Hence we may say that force, official authority, and regularity are the elements that modern jurisprudence teaches us we must seek when we wish to differentiate law from mere custom or morals in whatever society we may consider.

The role of the claimant and the crucial importance of the trouble-case are other factors that modern jurisprudence forces upon the attention of the anthropologist. The role of the claimant is the most important single factor in the development of law in primitive societies. Numerous writers have commented upon the relative absence of legislative enactment by primitive government. Professor Robert Lowie, who is distinguished among American anthropologists for his unique contributions to the study of legal phenomena, has offered a general statement that is fairly typical of the prevailing opinion: ". . . it should be noted that the legislative function in most primitive communities seems strangely curtailed when compared with that exercised in the more complex civilizations." Salmond parallels this with the statement that, "The function of the State in its earlier conception is to *enforce* the law, not to *make* it." Lowie continues: "All the exigencies of normal social intercourse are covered by customary law, and the business of such governmental machinery as exists is rather to exact obedience to traditional usage than to create new precedents." Now this would be true for wholly static societies, but Professor Lowie would be among the first to acknowledge, I believe, that no society is wholly static. New exigencies must always arise. One thing permanent about human society is its impermanence. Especially when strange cultures come into contact do new materials, new ways of behaving and ideas enter into the cultural picture.

These new elements are not usually adopted simultaneously by all members of the society. The inevitable consequence is that when some members get new goods and new ideas, they have new interests for which the old lines of the culture have made no provision. Their use of their new acquisitions almost certainly comes into conflict with the old standards held by others. New custom and new law must then be generated.

Recently anthropologists have given considerable attention to the processes of acculturation, but it is notable how little attention they have paid to the legal devices of cultural adjustment. Parenthetically, we may



add, not much recognition has been given to the day by day, person by person process by which such changes occur.

Modern jurisprudence has much to tell the anthropologist about leads for the study of the formation of law through the process of litigation. Sociological jurisprudence points up the fact that breach and disputes in conflicts of claims are the most constant source of the law. "Breach," says Seagle, "is the mother of law as necessity is the mother of invention." On the authority of Holmes we have it that "a law embodies beliefs that have triumphed in the battle of ideas and then translated themselves into action," and in the same vein Roscoe Pound has written: "The law is an attempt to reconcile, to harmonize, to compromise . . . overlapping or conflicting interests." Law exists in order to channel behavior so that conflicts of interest do not come to overt clash. It comes into existence to clear up the muddle when interests do clash, and the new decision, if it sticks, is usually so shaped as to determine which interests best accord with the accepted standards of what is good for the society. Of course, it is unfortunately true that tyrants, usurpers and pettifoggers can and do pervert the ends of law to their own designs without regard to social interests or prevailing standards of what is right.

As a canon of realistic law it may be said, and this is particularly important for anthropologists, that unless a dispute arises to test the principles of law in the crucible of litigation, there can be no certainty as to the precise rule of law for a particular situation, no matter what is said as to what will or should be done. A "law" that is never broken may be nothing more than an omnipotent custom, for one will never know more than this until it is sustained in a legal action with a legal sanction.

The field investigator, while among those primitives who are not given to verbalization of their norms, is virtually forced into a utilization of the case test of law, wherever cases can be found. For example, when I would experimentally ask Comanche Indians what was the tribal law in cases of wife absconding, the answer would usually be something like this: "Well, I can't tell about that. But I can tell you what happened when my uncle, Grey Robe, ran off with the wife of Howling Wolf." And when you find a thread of regularity running surely through a number of similar cases, the law begins to emerge.

When you put your eye on the trouble-case you cannot escape the crucial rôle of the claimant and the defendant in the shaping of the law. We all know from case-law experience that law grows in action, as in a test case, but this knowledge is more often neglected than used in the ethnological field. Experience supports the conclusion of Parker when he says: "Although in logical theory substantive law is prior to procedural law, historically the opposite is the case. Primitive *codes* consist

almost entirely of procedural rules; and the classical *dictum* that 'law is secreted in the interstices of procedure' must never be forgotten."

However or by whomsoever the judgment may be rendered in any dispute, it is the claimant and the defendant who will lay the grounds of claim, counterclaim or denial. And if one or the other does it skilfully, soundly and wisely, the *ratio decidendi* is likely to be found in his statement of his claim. No matter how selfish the drive of a disputant may be, unless he be a fool indeed, he poses his claim against the background of "right" social principles, of general rightness and the well-being of the entire social group. How else can he gain enduring social acceptance of his position? Naturally, also, the keener his acuteness, the more skilfully he lays his record and argues his case in terms of the consonance of his claim with the well-established principles of social order, the greater the probability that he will shape the law as he wishes it determined.

There is not the space here to unfold case examples of this process in proof of its action in primitive society, but Karl Llewellyn and I found rich evidence in the law-ways of the Cheyenne Indians, which we have presented in full detail elsewhere. Dr. Jane Richardson's Kiowa materials also reveal the building effect of pleading in primitive jurisprudence, but the Kiowa did not develop the unusual juristic skill that marks the work of the Cheyennes.

Still another instrument created by modern jurisprudence, which is of significance for the understanding of law in primitive society, is the Hohfeldian system of legal analysis. Use of the Hohfeldian fundamental concepts will help the anthropologist in at least four ways.

*First.* It keeps attention focused on the fact that all legal relations are relations between particular persons, and that this fact is primary in any understanding of law. Courts, constables and jails are secondary instruments, not the fundamentals of a legal system, when set up as a system of imperatives or relations. They are the behavior-data from which a system is constructed.

*Second.* The Hohfeldian analysis clarifies the exact meaning and content of the basic elements in legal relations through definition and functional demonstration of the operation of the demand-right—duty, privilege-right—no demand-right, power—liability, immunity—no-power relations. Hohfeld, as Cook has said, showed by many examples how our courts are constantly confronted by the necessity of distinguishing between the eight concepts, and are all too often confused by the lack of clear concepts and precise terminology. The same need and the same confusion confront the anthropologist who tries to unravel the legal institutions of primitive man. Yet, as Radin has assured us, by use of Hohfeld's sharp, clear concepts, it is possible ". . . to reduce any legal transaction, however complicated, to its actual constituent elements or atoms. . . ." And so, "Thinking this, in nicer terms, with nicer tools of thought, you pull the issue into clarity . . . unambiguously, because your terms are not ambiguous." The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Pudding available for testing can be

found in Hallowell's brilliant analysis of the institution of property (modern and primitive) and the application that has been made of Hohfeld to Yurok law and certain other primitive examples.

*Third.* Hohfeld's analysis conclusively demonstrates that the *components* of primitive legal relations are fundamentally identical with those of civilized law, *i.e.*, there is a least common denominator for primitive law and modern.

*Fourth.* It can be applied effectively to any social complex of imperative reciprocal relations, even though non-legal, and therefore aids in the understanding of other phases of social organization as well.

In short, Hohfeldian concepts are capable of being used and understood by any social scientist. They are the sharpest and surest tools for cutting through the fog of confusion that besets the anthropologist who would work with law. They are deserving of wide adoption by all who seriously undertake the full analysis of culture.

### 3

Thus far we have dwelt for the most part on what the integration of law and anthropology means for the science of anthropology. What then does it mean for law?

The essential value of anthropology in the study of human behavior is that it enables us to get outside of our own "cake of custom," providing a series of vantage points from which we can view our own culture and doings. Thus viewed, we can see how different people accomplish similar ends by similar means or by other devices; we can see how they conceive even totally different goals from those we are accustomed to hold dear; and so the findings of anthropology serve to stimulate new ideas and new thought in the solution of the problems that beset us. It also provides us with a test tube situation when we can find social set-ups already in existence that approximate conditions with which we might like to experiment. Anthropology is thus often able to supply the social scientist with a sort of substitute laboratory situation to provide already prepared controls to test his observations made on the data provided in our own social experience.

When Ehrlich claimed that "the history of law and ethnological legal science will not be of value for the understanding of existing law but only for the study of the development of law," and that "the attempt to arrive at an understanding of the present through the study of history or of prehistoric times, *i.e.*, of ethnology, is an error in principle," he was thinking exclusively of the evolutionary kind of German anthropology of law that we have condemned at the outset.

Among the moderns, Bronislaw Malinowski was the first of the anthropologists to make a real impact on legal doctrine through his now famous *Crime and Custom in Savage Society*. He described what he saw

as law not in terms of rules and principles but in terms of the behavior of real people whom he had observed, namely, Trobriand Islanders. "It is characteristic of Malinowski's method," wrote Sir James Frazer, "that he takes full account of the complexity of human nature. He sees man, so to say, in the round and not in the flat. He remembers that man is a creature of emotion at least as much as of reason, and he is constantly at pains to discuss the emotional as well as the rational basis of human action." Because of this quality in his work, Malinowski breathed life into the moribund still-birth that was anthropological jurisprudence two decades ago. Because his materials were real and vital, they were a challenge to the jurist that could not be ignored. This was so, even though his concepts of law were somewhat inexact; even to the end he refused to recognize the significance of breach and authoritative sanction in the determination of law. He insisted that the key to law is reciprocity and its basic sanction the withdrawal of reciprocal services. His concept of law was over-broad, over-sociological and subject to devastating attack from the lawyer's point of view. Nevertheless, he entered a lustily driven wedge into the shell of orthodox jurisprudence, and he added momentum to the doctrine that law is social behavior and not logical abstraction.

It is in just this last named effect that the study of primitive law makes its most fundamental contribution to jurisprudence. The lawyer who reads and digests the meat of the materials from primitive man will find himself orienting his legal thought in terms of law as a social device, *viz.*, a means to an end, not an end in itself. How far this may intensify his social conscience, I cannot say, but there can be no doubt but that it will stimulate his social science consciousness by building an attitude of the scientist at his work and in laying the base of a "social physiology of law." This is good, for the lawyer is to the body politic as the physician is to the anatomy of man.

Anthropology makes even more specific contributions to legal craft and legal doctrine. Perhaps the deadliest social sin of the law profession is legalism: the gross hypertrophy of the controlling power of substantive rules and procedural decorum. Technicality overwhelms technique. Legalism has fortunately never wholly hardened the arteries of American law, although it has sometimes clogged them in an uncomfortable way. We, too, find that justice and law are not always synonymous, and that sometimes the law leads to outrageous results. The need for regularity, the quest for certainty, and the desire for a socially sound decision for the case at hand set the elements of a persistent dilemma for the jurist. When the urge for regularity rules with a tyrant hand and legalism prevails, the layman curses law and the men of law, and, if we are to believe the poet, causes sympathetic hearse horses to snicker "hauling the bones of a lawyer."

Now contrary to the assertion of legal historians, legalism is not a general characteristic of primitive law. Except for the despotic monarchies of the African Negroes, who show a remarkable penchant for litigation and ritualistic procedure, most primitives have not developed legal techniques to be used as perverse tools by specializing functionaries. Law is largely in the hands of the people. Nor is it nearly so involved in magic as is commonly thought. Each litigant wants what he thinks is his due, and so long as he has a considerable degree of control over the procedure, his interests act as a check on the human tendency to ritualize beyond functional effectiveness.

However, some primitives are more consciously aware of their cultures as devices for getting things done than are others. Malinowski scoffed the benighted notion that the savage is the automatic slave of custom. Like moderns, all of them are more or less aware of the fact that culture is something to be used, or sometime to be avoided when it stands in the way and cannot be wholly manipulated. When this awareness is acute and men have the skill to turn it to the solution of the legal problems they have the essence of what Karl Llewellyn has aptly called "legal method." When that skill is such that they can solve their internal conflicts in such a way that substantive rules are sound and fair, so that procedure channels the course of legal action towards the resolution of conflict in terms of social wisdom, the method that that skill produces is "juristic method." It is what the jurist who has pride in his work strives for as a high art. It is that which the layman senses with satisfaction and the legal craftsman views with joy. It is that towards which the pettifogger or higher legalist has no sensitivity.

The great difficulty in this matter of juristic method is that there seems to be little technique for communicating its ways to others on the part of those who have it. Are the law teachers able to do it? Perhaps a few of the very great ones do it. Can the experienced judge pass it on to the lawyer who is ascending to the bench? Some lawyers sense it in the work of the best judges. But Cardozo is on record with testimony that few judges can verbally communicate even the techniques of the judicial process of finding the decision, to say nothing of the more subtle juristic method. When judges and lawyers find it difficult to transmit knowledge of the techniques of sure juristic method, it is more a matter of chance than purpose when we find men exercising it in our law courts and legislatures.

Where does the ethnology of law enter into this problem? It is often easier to see the working of juristic method when we see it operative in situations in which we are not involved. Then we can recognize the thing, can formulate its ways, and with our own hands wilfully apply it to our own legal doings to the betterment of our lot.

## 4

In the integration of the new world that must come, anthropology and law have their great opportunity to join hands in the service of mankind. Hundreds of millions of peoples in Africa and Asia are emerging with the consciousness of self that demands self-determination. The majority of the world's nations are met to join mankind in a world organization. Now as never before, does the integration of the world's myriad legal systems become an imperative need in the satisfaction of human aspirations. As the United Nations matures into the real government that the present status of mankind demands, a wide knowledge of the fundamentals of the legal systems of all mankind will become an absolute imperative for those who would legislate for all humanity. There must be more and more study and research in comparative law. Lawyer and anthropologist must work hand in hand to find the facts, the methods and the values that human legal experience on all levels prove best suited to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

## 28 On the Evolution of Social Stratification and the State



Morton H. Fried

SOME PEOPLE CAN'T LEAVE OLD PROBLEMS ALONE. THEY ARE NOT FRIGHTENED off by the fact that the old problem failed to be solved by great thinkers of the past and they are not even discouraged by the realization that the problems themselves become old-fashioned and out of vogue. Such a problem is that concerning the evolutionary origins of ranking, social stratification, and the state.

If the article below has any originality it may be found in two sets of concepts. One set elaborates a distinction between "ranking" and "stratification" and argues that they pursued separate developmental careers. The other set contrasts "pristine" and "secondary" development, particularly of the state, and asserts that what is known of the latter can often lead to error when applied to reconstruction of the origins of the former.

Apart from the foregoing, this article is an interesting example of the synthesis of ideas. The reader will notice how the argument combines leads from diverse sources including the work of the economist Polanyi (see II:14), the institutional historian Wittfogel (see II:12), the anthropologist Steward (see I:43), and others.

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*The evolutionists never discussed in detail—still less observed—what actually happened when a society in Stage A changed into a society at Stage B; it was merely argued that all Stage B societies must somehow have evolved out of the Stage A societies.*

E. R. LEACH

To some extent E. R. Leach's charge, which relates to the evolution of political organization, is unfair. The climate in which pristine systems of state organization took shape no longer exists. The presence of numerous modern states and the efficiency of communications have converted all movements toward state level organization into acculturation phenomena of some degree. In fact, it seems likely that the only true pristine states—those whose origin was *sui generis*, out of local conditions and not in response to pressures emanating from an already highly organized but separate political entity—are those which arose in the great river valleys of Asia and Africa and the one or two comparable developments in the Western Hemisphere. Elsewhere the development of the state seems to have been "secondary" and to have depended upon pressures, direct or indirect, from existing states. Where such pressures exist, the process of development is accelerated, condensed, and often warped, so that a study of contemporary state formation is a murky mirror in which to discern the stages in the development of the pristine states.

Further, the conditions of emergence of rank and stratification as pristine phenomena are similarly obscured when the impetus to change is the introduction of aspects of a market economy, money as a medium of exchange, rationalization of production, and the transformation of labor into a commodity. It would be extremely gratifying to actually observe societies in transition from a "Stage A" (egalitarian organization) to a "Stage B" (rank society) and from there to a "Stage C" (stratification society) and finally from that stage to a "Stage D" (state society). Indeed, some of these observations have been made, though no one has yet been able to follow a single society or even selected exemplars from a group of genetically related societies through all these stages. Instead a variety of unrelated societies are selected, each representing one or another of the several possible transitions. Mr. Leach himself has contributed one of the most valuable of the accounts dealing with this matter in his analysis of the movement from *gumlao* to *gumsa* organization among the Kachin of northern Burma.

Following leads supplied in the data of such accounts as that of Leach, just mentioned, of Douglas Oliver, and others, it is our intention to discuss in detail the things which it seems to us must have occurred in order to make the previous transitions possible. Since the data are largely contemporary, the statements are to be viewed as hypotheses in their application to pristine situations beyond even archaeological recall.



Here then is what we seek to accomplish: (1) to suggest some specific institutional developments, the occurrences of which are normal and predictable in viable societies under certain conditions, and in the course of which the whole society perforce moves into a new level of socio-cultural organization; (2) to suggest some of the conditions under which these institutional developments occurred and came to florescence; (3) to indicate as a by-product, that the movement occurs without conscious human intervention, the alterations taking place slowly enough and with such inevitability that the society is revolutionized before the carriers of the culture are aware of major changes.

In approaching this task, it seems wise, if only to head off needless argument, to deny any intention of supplying a single master key to a lock that has defied the efforts of great talents from the time of the Classical civilizations to the present. It seems obvious that other sequences of events than those sketched here could, under proper circumstances, have had similar results. Indeed, the writer is eager to entertain other possibilities and hopes hereby to stimulate others to offer counter suggestions. It will also be obvious to the reader that substantial trains of thought herein stated are merely borrowed and not created by the writer. The recent strides in economic anthropology, and I refer primarily to the work of Polanyi, Arensberg, and Pearson, the clarification of some basic concepts in the study of social organization, and the incentives provided by a seminal paper by Paul Kirchhoff have all been combined in the present effort.

### *The Non-Rank, Non-Stratified Society*

Every human society differentiates among its members and assigns greater or less prestige to individuals according to certain of their attributes. The simplest and most universal criteria of differential status are those two potent axes of the basic division of labor, age and sex. Beyond are a host of others which are used singly or in combination to distinguish among the members of a category otherwise undifferentiated as to sex or age group. Most important of the characteristics used in this regard are those which have a visible relation to the maintenance of subsistence, such as strength, endurance, agility, and other factors which make one a good provider in a hunting and gathering setting. These characteristics are ephemeral; moreover, the systems of enculturation prevalent at this level, with their emphasis upon the development of subsistence skills, make it certain that such skills are well distributed among the members of society of the proper sex and age groups.

The major deviation from this system of subsistence-oriented statuses is associated with age. However, it makes no difference to the argument of this paper whether the status of the old is high or low since

the basis of its ascription is universal. Anyone who is of the proper sex and manages to live long enough automatically enters into its benefits or disabilities.

Given the variation in individual endowment which makes a chimera of absolute equality, the primitive societies which we are considering are sufficiently undifferentiated in this respect to permit us to refer to them as "egalitarian societies." An egalitarian society can be defined more precisely: it is one in which there are as many positions of prestige in any given age-sex grade as there are persons capable of filling them. If within a certain kin group or territory there are four big men, strong, alert, keen hunters, then there will be four "strong men"; if there are six, or three, or one, so it is. Eskimo society fits this general picture. So do many others. Almost all of these societies are founded upon hunting and gathering and lack significant harvest periods when large reserves of food are stored.

There is one further point I wish to emphasize about egalitarian society. It accords quite remarkably with what Karl Polanyi has called a reciprocal economy.

Production in egalitarian society is characteristically a household matter. There is no specialization; each family group repeats essentially similar tasks. There may be individuals who make certain things better than do others, and these individuals are often given recognition for their skills, but no favored economic role is established, no regular division of labor emerges at this point, and no political power can reside in the status. Exchange in such a society takes place between individuals who belong to different small-scale kin groups; it tends to be casual and is not bound by systems of monetary value based upon scarcity. Such exchanges predominate between individuals who recognize each other as relatives or friends, and may be cemented by such procedures as the provision of hospitality and the granting of sexual access to wives.

Within the local group or band the economy is also reciprocal, but less obviously so. Unlike the exchanges between members of different local groups which, over the period of several years, tend to balance, the exchanges within a group may be quite asymmetrical over time. The skilled and lucky hunter may be continually supplying others with meat; while his family also receives shares from the catch of others, income never catches up with the amounts dispensed. However, the difference between the two quantities is made up in the form of prestige, though, as previously mentioned, it conveys no privileged economic or political role. There frequently is a feeling of transience as it is understood that the greatest hunter can lose his luck or his life, thereby making his family dependent on the largesse of others.

In all egalitarian economies, however, there is also a germ of redistribution. It receives its simplest expression in the family but can grow

no more complex than the pooling and redibursing of stored food for an extended family. In such an embryonic redistributive system the key role is frequently played by the oldest female in the active generation, since it is she who commonly coordinates the household and runs the kitchen.

### *The Rank Society*

Since a truly egalitarian human society does not exist, it is evident that we are using the word "rank" in a somewhat special sense. The crux of the matter, as far as we are concerned, is the structural way in which differential prestige is handled in the rank society as contrasted with the way in which egalitarian societies handle similar materials. If the latter have as many positions of valued status as they have individuals capable of handling them, the rank society places additional limitations on access to valued status. The limitations which are added have nothing to do with sex, age group, or personal attributes. Thus, the rank society is characterized by having fewer positions of valued status than individuals capable of handling them. Furthermore, most rank societies have a fixed number of such positions, neither expanding them nor diminishing them with fluctuations in the populations, save as totally new segmented units originate with fission or disappear as the result of catastrophe or sterility.

The simplest technique of limiting status, beyond those already discussed, is to make succession to status dependent upon birth order. This principle, which is found in kinship-organized societies, persists in many more complexly organized societies. At its simplest, it takes the form of primogeniture or ultimogeniture on the level of the family, extended family, or lineage. In more complex forms it may be projected through time so that only the first son of a first son of a first son enjoys the rights of succession, all others having been excluded by virtue of ultimate descent from a positionless ancestor. There are still other variants based on the theme: the accession to high status may be by election, but the candidates may come only from certain lineages which already represent selection by birth order.

The effects of rules of selection based on birth can be set aside by conscious action. Incompetence can be the basis for a decision to bypass the customary heir, though it would seem more usual for the nominal office to remain vested in the proper heir while a more energetic person performed the functions of the status. A strategic murder could also accomplish the temporary voiding of the rule, but such a solution is much too dangerous and extreme to be practical on the level which we are considering. It is only in rather advanced cultures that the rewards

associated with such statuses are sufficient to motivate patricide and fratricide.

Whether accomplished by a rule of succession or some other narrowing device, the rank society as a framework of statuses resembles a triangle, the point of which represents the leading status hierarchically exalted above the others. The hierarchy thus represented has very definite economic significance, going hand in hand with the emergence of a superfamilial redistributive network. The key status is that of the central collector of allotments who also tends to the redistribution of these supplies either in the form of feasts or as emergency seed and provender in time of need. Depending on the extent and maturity of the redistributive system, there will be greater or lesser development of the hierarchy. Obviously, small-scale networks in which the members have a face-to-face relationship with the person in the central status will have less need of a bureaucracy.

In the typical ranked society there is neither exploitative economic power nor genuine political power. As a matter of fact, the central status closely resembles its counterpart in the embryonic redistributive network that may be found even in the simplest societies. This is not surprising, for the system in typical rank societies is actually based upon a physical expansion of the kin group and the continuation of previously known kinship rights and obligations. The kingpin of a redistributive network in an advanced hunting and gathering society or a simple agricultural one is as much the victim of his role as its manipulator. His special function is to collect, not to expropriate; to distribute, not to consume. In a conflict between personal accumulation and the demands of distribution it is the former which suffers. Anything else leads to accusations of hoarding and selfishness and undercuts the prestige of the central status; the whole network then stands in jeopardy, a situation which cannot be tolerated. This, by the way, helps to explain that "anomaly" that has so frequently puzzled students of societies of this grade: why are their "chiefs" so often poor, perhaps poorer than any of their neighbors? The preceding analysis makes such a question rhetorical.

It is a further characteristic of the persons filling these high status positions in typical rank societies that they must carry out their functions in the absence of political authority. Two kinds of authority they have: familial, in the extended sense, and sacred, as the redistributive feasts commonly are associated with the ritual life of the community. They do not, however, have access to the privileged use of force, and they can use only diffuse and supernatural sanctions to achieve their ends. Indeed, the two major methods by which they operate are by setting personal examples, as of industriousness, and by utilizing the principles of reciprocity to bolster the emergent redistributive economy.

Despite strong egalitarian features in its economic and political sectors, the developing rank society has strong status differentials which are marked by sumptuary specialization and ceremonial function. While it is a fact that the literature abounds in references to "chiefs" who can issue no positive commands and "ruling classes" whose members are among the paupers of the realm, it must be stated in fairness that the central redistributive statuses *are* associated with fuss, feathers, and other trappings of office. These people sit on stools, have big houses, and are consulted by their neighbors. Their redistributive roles place them automatically to the fore in the religious life of the community, but they are also in that position because of their central kinship status as lineage, clan, or kindred heads.

### *From Egalitarian to Rank Society*

The move from egalitarian to rank society is essentially the shift from an economy dominated by reciprocity to one having redistribution as a major device. That being the case, one must look for the causes of ranking (the limitation of statuses such that they are fewer than the persons capable of handling them) in the conditions which enable the redistributive economy to emerge from its position of latency in the universal household economy, to dominate a network of kin groups which extend beyond the boundaries of anything known on the reciprocal level.

Though we shall make a few suggestions relating to this problem, it should be noted that the focus of this paper does not necessitate immediate disposition of this highly complicated question. In view of the history of our topic, certain negative conclusions are quite significant. Most important of all is the deduction that the roots of ranking do not lie in features of human personality. The structural approach obviates, in this case, psychological explanations. To be precise, we need assume no universal human drive for power in comprehending the evolution of ranking.

It is unthinkable that we should lead a reader this far without indicating certain avenues whereby the pursuit of the problem may be continued. We ask, therefore, what are the circumstances under which fissioning kin or local groups retain active economic interdigitation, the method of interaction being participation in the redistributive network?

In a broad sense, the problem may be seen as an ecological one. Given the tendency of a population to breed up to the limit of its resources and given the probably universal budding of kin and local groups which have reached cultural maxima of unit size, we look into different techno-geographical situations for clues as to whether more recently formed units will continue to interact significantly with their parent units, thereby extending the physical and institutional range of

the economy. Such a situation clearly arises when the newer group moves into a somewhat different environment while remaining close enough to the parent group to permit relatively frequent interaction among the members of the two groups. Given such a condition, the maintenance of a redistributive network would have the effect of diversifying subsistence in both units and also providing insurance against food failures in one or the other. This is clearly something of a special case.

It is possible to bring to bear upon this problem an argument similar to that employed by Tylor in the question of the incest taboo, to wit: the redistributive network might appear as a kind of random social mutation arising out of nonspecific factors difficult to generalize, such as a great personal dependence of the members of the offspring unit upon those they have left behind. Whatever the immediate reason for its appearance, it would quickly show a superiority over simple reciprocal systems in (a) productivity, (b) timeliness of distribution, (c) diversity of diet, and (d) coordination of mundane and ceremonial calendars (in a loose cyclical sense). It is not suggested that the success of the institution depends upon the rational cognition of these virtues by the culture carriers; rather the advantages of these institutions would have positive survival value over a long period of time.

We should not overlook one other possibility that seems less special than the first one given above. Wittfogel has drawn our attention on numerous occasions to the social effects of irrigation. The emergence of the superfamilial redistributive network and the rank society seem to go well with the developments he has discussed under the rubric "hydro-agriculture," in which some supervision is needed in order to control simple irrigation and drainage projects yet these projects are not large enough to call into existence a truly professional bureaucracy.

It may be wondered that one of the prime explanations for the emergence of ranking, one much favored by notable sociologists of the past, has not appeared in this argument. Reference is to the effects of war upon a society. I would like in this article to take a deliberately extreme stand and assert that military considerations serve to institutionalize rank differences only when these are already implicit or manifest in the economy. I do not believe that pristine developments in the formalization of rank can be attributed to even grave military necessity.

### *The Stratified Society*

The differences between rank society and stratified society are very great, yet it is rare that the two are distinguished in descriptive accounts or even in the theoretical literature. Briefly put, the essential difference is this: the rank society operates on the principle of differential status for

members with similar abilities, but these statuses are devoid of privileged economic or political power, the former point being the essential one for the present analysis. Meanwhile, the stratified society is distinguished by the differential relationships between the members of the society and its subsistence means—some of the members of the society have unimpeded access to its strategic resources<sup>1</sup> while others have various impediments in their access to the same fundamental resources.

With the passage to stratified society man enters a completely new area of social life. Whereas the related systems of redistribution and ranking rest upon embryonic institutions that are as universal as family organization (*any* family, elementary or extended, conjugal or consanguineal, will do equally well), the principles of stratification have no real foreshadowing on the lower level.

Furthermore, the movement to stratification precipitated many things which were destined to change society even further, and at an increasingly accelerated pace. Former systems of social control which rested heavily on enculturation, internalized sanctions, and ridicule now required formal statement of their legal principles, a machinery of adjudication, and a formally constituted police authority. The emergence of these and other control institutions was associated with the final shift of prime authority from kinship means to territorial means and describes the evolution of complex forms of government associated with the state. It was the passage to stratified society which laid the basis for the complex division of labor which underlies modern society. It also gave rise to various arrangements of socio-economic classes and led directly to both classical and modern forms of colonialism and imperialism.

### *The Transition to Stratified Society*

The decisive significance of stratification is not that it sees differential amounts of wealth in different hands but that it sees two kinds of access to strategic resources. One of these is privileged and unimpeded; the other is impaired, depending on complexes of permission which frequently require the payment of dues, rents, or taxes in labor or kind. The existence of such a distinction enables the growth of exploitation, whether of a relatively simple kind based upon drudge slavery or of a more complex type associated with involved divisions of labor and intricate class systems. The development of stratification also encourages the emergence of communities composed of kin parts and non-kin parts which, as wholes, operate on the basis of non-kin mechanisms.

So enormous is the significance of the shift to stratification that previous commentators have found it essential that the movement be

<sup>1</sup>Strategic resources are those things which, given the technological base and environmental setting of the culture, maintain subsistence.

associated with the most powerful people in the society. Landtman, for example, says: "It is in conjunction with the dissimilarity of individual endowments that inequality of wealth has conduced to the rise of social differentiation. As a matter of course the difference as regards property in many cases goes hand in hand with difference in personal qualities. A skilful hunter or fisher, or a victorious warrior, has naturally a better prospect of acquiring a fortune than one who is inferior to him in these respects."

If our analysis is correct, however, such is definitely not the case. The statuses mentioned by Landtman are not those which stand to make great accumulations but rather stand to make great give-aways. Furthermore, the leap from distribution to power is unwarranted by the ethnographic evidence.

There are unquestionably a number of ways in which secondary conditions of stratification can emerge. That is, once the development of stratification proceeds from contact with and tutelage by cultures which are at the least already stratified and which may be the possessors of mature state organization, there are many specific ways in which simpler cultures can be transformed into stratified societies. The ways which come quickest to mind include the extension of the complex society's legal definitions of property to the simpler society, the introduction of all-purpose money and wage labor, and the creation of an administrative system for the operation of the simpler society on a basis which is acceptable to the superordinate state. Often the external provenance of these elements is obvious in their misfit appearance. A sharper look may reveal, indeed, that the stratified system is a mere façade operated for and often by persons who have no genuine local identities, while the local system continues to maintain informally, and sometimes in secrecy, the older organization of the society. Put more concretely, this means that "government" appointed chiefs are respected only in certain limited situations and that the main weight of social control continues to rest upon traditional authorities and institutions which may not even be recognized by the ruling power.

An excellent climate for the development of stratification in a simple society can be supplied in a relatively indirect way by a society of advanced organization. Let us take the situation in which a culture has no concept of nuclear family rights to land. The economy is based upon hunting, trapping, and fishing, with the streams and forests being associated in a general way with weakly organized bands which have a decided tendency to fragment and reconstitute, each time with potentially different membership. Subvert this setup with an external market for furs and a substantial basis for stratification has been laid. This system, like the direct intervention of a superordinate state, also seems to have certain limitations for there is ample evidence that the development of private



property in such a system as that just mentioned is confined to trapping lines and does not extend to general subsistence hunting and fishing in the area.

Another situation that bears study is one in which important trade routes linking two or more advanced societies traverse marginal areas in which simple societies are located. Certain geographical conditions make it possible for the relatively primitive folk to enhance their economies with fruits derived from the plunder of this trade or, in a more mature system, by extorting tribute from the merchants who must pass by. The remoteness of these areas, the difficulty of the terrain and the extreme difficulties and costs of sending a punitive force to pacify the area often enable the simpler people to harass populations whose cultural means for organized violence far exceed their own. Be this as it may, the combination of the examples of organization presented by the outposts of complexly organized societies and the availability of commodities which could not be produced in the simple culture may combine to lay the basis for an emergence of stratification. Precisely such conditions seem partially responsible for the political developments described for the Kachin.

None of this seems to apply to the pristine emergence of stratification. As a matter of fact, it is not even particularly suggestive. There is, however, one particular ecological condition that appears in highland Burma which also has been noted elsewhere, each time in association with rather basic shifts in social organization paralleling those already sketched in the previous section of this paper. We refer to the shift from rainfall to irrigation farming, particularly to the construction of terraced fields. This is admittedly a restricted ethnographic phenomenon and as such it cannot bear the weight of any general theory. It is the suggestive character of these developments and the possibility of extrapolating from them to hypothetical pristine conditions that make them so interesting.

In brief, the shift to irrigation and terracing is from swiddens or impermanent fields to plots which will remain in permanent cultivation for decades and generations. Whereas we have previously stressed the possible role of hydro-agriculture in the transition from egalitarian to rank society, we now note its possible role in the transition to stratification. This it could accomplish by creating conditions under which access to strategic resources, in this case land and water, would be made the specific prerogative of small-scale kin groups such as minimal lineages or even stem families. Through the emergence of hydro-agriculture a community which previously acknowledged no *permanent* association between particular component units and particular stretches of land now begins to recognize such permanent and exclusive rights. Incidentally, the evidence seems to indicate that the rank-forming tendencies of hydro-agriculture need not occur prior to the tendencies toward stratifi-

cation: both can occur concomitantly. This in turn suggests that we must be cautious in constructing our theory not to make stratification emerge from ranking, though under particular circumstances this is certainly possible.

A point of considerable interest about hydro-agriculture is that it seems to present the possibility of an emergence of stratification in the absence of a problem of over-population or resource limitation. We need a great deal of further thought on the matter. Studies of the last two decades, in which a considerably higher degree of agricultural expertise on the part of the fieldworkers has been manifested than was formerly the case, have increasingly tended to show that hydro-agriculture does not invariably out-produce slash and burn and that, other things being equal, a population does not automatically prefer hydro-agriculture as a more rationalized approach to agricultural subsistence. Here we can introduce a factor previously excluded. The hydro-agricultural system invariably has a higher degree of settlement concentration than swiddens. Accordingly, it would seem to have considerable value in the maintenance of systems of defense, given the presence of extensive warfare. Here, then, is a point at which military considerations would seem to play an important if essentially reinforcing role in the broad evolutionary developments which we are considering.

The writer is intrigued with another possibility for the emergence of stratification. Once again, the conditions involved seem a little too specific to serve the purpose of a single unified theory. It requires the postulation of a society with a fixed rule of residence, preferably one of the simpler ones such as patrilocality/virilocal or matrilocality/uxorilocality and a fixed rule of descent, preferably one parallel to the residence rule. It further postulates a condition of population expansion such that, given slash and burn agriculture, the society is very near the limits of the carrying capacity of the system. Such conditions are very likely to develop at varying speeds within an area of several hundred miles due to obvious imbalances in reproductive rates and to micro-ecological variation. Now, as long as there is no notable pressure of people on the land, deviation in residence and even in descent will be expectable though quite unusual and lacking in motivation. As the situation grows grave in one area but remains relatively open in another, there may be a tendency for a slight readjustment in residence rules to occur. For example, in a normally virilocal society, the woman who brings her husband back to her natal group transgresses a few customary rules in doing so but presents her agnates with no basic problems in resource allocation since she, as a member of the agnatic group, has her own rights of access which may be shared by the spouse during her lifetime. The complication arises at her death when her husband and all of her children discover themselves to be in an anomalous position since they are not

members of the kin community. Where local land problems are not severe and where such breaches of the residence pattern are yet uncommon, it is not unlikely that the aliens will be accepted as *de facto* members of the community with the expectation that future generations will revert to custom, the unorthodox switch of residence fading in memory with the passage of time. Here we have a crude and informal *ambil-anak*. But as the local community enters worsening ecological circumstances and as the exceptional residence becomes more frequent, the residence and descent rules, particularly the latter, assume greater and greater importance. As the situation continues, the community is slowly altered, though the members of the community may be unable to state exactly what the changes are. The result, however, is clear. There are now two kinds of people in the village where formerly there was only one. Now there are kernel villagers, those who have unimpaired access to land, and those whose tenure rests upon other conditions, such as loyalty to a patron, or tribute, or even a precarious squatter's right.

### *The State Society*

"The word should be abandoned entirely . . . after this chapter the word will be avoided scrupulously and no severe hardship in expression will result. In fact, clarity of expression demands this abstinence." Thus has spoken at least one well-known political scientist.

The word was "state" and David Easton, the political scientist, was reacting to some of the problems in his own field in making this judgment, but it does look as if he was pushed to drastic action by the work of some anthropologists in whose hands the concept of state lost all character and utility, finally ending as a cultural universal. E. Adamson Hoebel, one of the few United States anthropologists to make a serious specialization in the field of law and the state, formerly introduced students to this question by remarking that

where there is political organization there is a state. If political organization is universal, so then is the state. One is the group, the other an institutionalized complex of behavior.

In a revision of the same book after a few years, Hoebel's treatment of the subject seems to indicate that he is in the process of rethinking the matter. His summary words, however, repeat the same conclusion:

Political organization is characteristic of every society. . . . That part of culture that is recognized as political organization is what constitutes the state.

This is a far cry from the approach of evolutionists to the state as exemplified in Sumner and Keller:

The term state is properly reserved for a somewhat highly developed regulative organization. . . . It is an organization with authority and discipline essential to large-scale achievements, as compared with the family, for example, which is an organization on the same lines but simpler and less potent.

Without making a special issue of the definition of the state (which would easily consume the entire space of this article, if not the volume) let me note one used by the jurist Léon Duguit which conveys the sense most useful to the point of view of this paper:

Taking the word in its most general sense, it can be said that there is a state every time a given society includes political differentiation, no matter how rudimentary or how complex and developed it may be. The word state may designate the government, or the political power or the society itself in which exists this differentiation between rulers and ruled and where there is by the same token a political power.

The difference between Hoebel and Duguit seems to be in the clear statement of power. Reviewing our own paper in the light of this difference we note our previous emphasis on the absence of coercive economic or political power in the egalitarian and rank societies. It is only in the stratified society that such power emerges from embryonic and universal foreshadowings in familial organization.

The maturation of social stratification has manifold implications depending on the precise circumstances in which the developments take place. All subsequent courses, however, have a certain area of overlap; the new social order, with its differential allocation of access to strategic resources, must be maintained and strengthened. In a simple stratified society in which class differentials are more implicit than explicit the network of kin relations covers a sufficient portion of the total fabric of social relations so that areas not specifically governed by genuine kinship relations can be covered by their sociological extensions. The dynamic of stratification is such that this situation cannot endure. The stratified kin group emphasizes its exclusiveness: it erodes the corporative economic functions formerly associated with stipulated kinship and at every turn it amputates extensions of the demonstrated kin unit. The result of this pruning is that the network of kin relations fails more and more to coincide with the network of personal relations. Sooner or later the discrepancy is of such magnitude that, were non-kin sanctions and non-kin agencies absent or structured along customary lines only, the society would dissolve in uncomposable conflict.

The emergent state, then, is the organization of the power of the society on a supra-kin basis. Among its earliest tasks is the maintenance of general order but scarcely discernible from this is its need to support the order of stratification. The defense of a complete system of indi-

vidual statuses is impossible so the early state concentrates on a few key statuses (helping to explain the tendency to convert any crime into either sacrilege or *lèse majesté*) and on the basic principles of organization, e.g., the idea of hierarchy, property, and the power of the law.

The implementation of these primary functions of the state gives rise to a number of specific and characteristic secondary functions, each of which is associated with one or more particular institutions of its own. These secondary functions include population control in the most general sense (the fixing of boundaries and the definition of the unit; establishment of categories of membership; census). Also a secondary function is the disposal of trouble cases (civil and criminal laws moving toward the status of codes; regular legal procedure; regular officers of adjudication). The protection of sovereignty is also included (maintenance of military forces; police forces and power; eminent domain). Finally, all of the preceding require fiscal support, and this is achieved in the main through taxation and conscription.

In treating of this bare but essential list of state functions and institutions the idea of the state as a universal aspect of culture dissolves as a fantasy. The institutions just itemized may be made to appear in ones or twos in certain primitive societies by exaggeration and by the neglect of known history. In no egalitarian society and in no rank society do a majority of the functions enumerated appear regardless of their guise. Furthermore there is no indication of their appearance as a unified functional response to basic sociocultural needs except in those stratified societies which are verging upon statehood.

### *The Transition to State*

Just as stratified society grew out of antecedent forms of society without the conscious awareness of the culture carriers, so it would seem that the state emerged from the stratified society in a similar, inexorable way. If this hypothesis is correct, then such an explanation as the so-called "conquest theory" can be accepted only as a special case of "secondary-state" formation. The conquests discussed by such a theorist as Franz Oppenheimer established not stratification but super-stratification, either the conqueror or the conquered, or perhaps even both, already being internally stratified.

The problem of the transition to state is so huge and requires such painstaking application to the available archaeological and historical evidence that it would be foolish to pursue it seriously here. Let us conclude, therefore, by harking back to statements made at the outset of this paper, and noting again the distinction between pristine and secondary states. By the former term is meant a state that has developed

*sui generis* out of purely local conditions. No previous state, with its acculturative pressures, can be discerned in the background of a pristine state. The secondary state, on the other hand, is pushed by one means or another toward a higher form of organization by an external power which has already been raised to statehood.

The number of pristine states is strictly limited; several centuries possibly two millennia, have elapsed since the last one emerged in Meso-America, and there seems to be no possibility that any further states of the pristine type will evolve, though further research may bring to light some of the distant past of which we yet have no positive information. In all, there seem to have been some six centers at which pristine states emerged, four in the Old World and two in the New: the Tigris-Euphrates area, the region of the lower Nile, the country drained by the Indus and the middle course of the Huang Ho where it is joined by the Han, Wei, and Fen. The separate areas of Peru-Bolivia and Meso-America complete the roster.

If there is utility in the concept of the pristine state and if history has been read correctly in limiting the designation to the six areas just enumerated, then we discover a remarkable correlation between areas demanding irrigation or flood control and the pristine state. Certainly this is no discovery of the author. It is one of the central ideas of Wittfogel's theory and has received extensive treatment from Julian Steward and others. The implication of the "hydraulic theory" for this paper, however, is that the development of the state as an internal phenomenon is associated with major tasks of drainage and irrigation. The emergence of a control system to ensure the operation of the economy is closely tied to the appearance of a distinctive class system and certain constellations of power in the hands of a managerial bureaucracy which frequently operates below a ruler who commands theoretically unlimited power.

It is an interesting commentary on nineteenth-century political philosophy that the starting point of so many theories was, of necessity, the Classical world of Greece and Rome. According to the present hypothesis, however, both of these great political developments of antiquity were not pristine but secondary formations which built on cultural foundations laid two thousand years and more before the rise of Greece. Furthermore, it would seem that the active commercial and military influences of the truly ancient pristine states, mediated through the earliest of the secondary states to appear in Asia Minor and the eastern Mediterranean littoral, were catalysts in the events of the northern and western Mediterranean.

### *Conclusion*

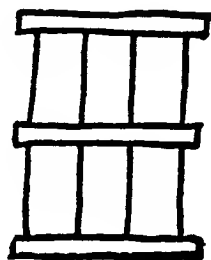
The close of a paper like this, which moves like a gadfly from time to time, place to place, and subject matter to subject matter, and which never pauses long enough to make a truly detailed inquiry or supply the needed documentation, the close of such a paper requires an apology perhaps more than a conclusion.

I have been led to write this paper by my ignorance of any modern attempt to link up the contributions which have been made in many sub-disciplines into a single unified theory of the emergence of social stratification and the state. That the theory offered here is crude, often too special, and by no means documented seems less important than that it may be used as a sitting duck to attract the fire and better aim of others.

# THE STUDY OF CHANGING AND COMPLEX SOCIETIES

## 29 Levels of Sociocultural Integration

Julian H. Steward



CULTURE IS AN EMERGENT: WITH THE ADVENT OF MASSIVE SYMBOLING A new order of phenomena appeared. This order rests upon pre-existing conditions—a physical universe and the fact of life—but the laws of physics and chemistry and the principles of biology and psychology do not explain cultural events. (No combination of these laws and principles can explain why a Chinese eats with chopsticks or a European with a fork.) Observations of the differences between these orders has led to the formulation of a theory of their relationships and sequence, the theory of levels of integration. There are many facets to this theory; one of them deals with the distinctions between the three major kinds of phenomena which are physical (space, time and energy), biological (life) and symbolic (culture). Each of these, however, is internally further subdivided into levels. We cannot here dwell on internal distinctions in either the physical or biological orders but we must note the theory of sociocultural levels. This is of particular relevance because it gives a framework for the anthropological approach to the study of complex societies. The major social units in this approach are states. Their populations can run into hundreds of millions; they are often divided into regions, and further complicated by class, ethnic, religious and other categories. On another plane, the complex society is composed of

SOURCE: Chapter 4 of *Theory of Culture Change* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1955), pp. 43–63. Reprinted with permission of the author and publisher. This is a revision of an article of the same title which appeared in the *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, Vol. 7 (1951), pp. 374–390. For biographical data on the author, see II: 10.



*families and communities. The following selection is an attempt to set up theoretical coordinates for the studies of complex societies in the face of these difficulties.*

### *The Theory of Levels of Integration*

Many anthropologists who began their careers in research on tribal societies now find themselves involved in the analysis of such complicated contemporary sociocultural systems as China, Russia, India, or the United States. It is not surprising that they bring to these newer tasks methodological tools that were devised primarily for the study of tribal society. Valuable as these tools are for many purposes, they are not adequate to deal with all the phenomena encountered either in the study of modern nations or in the analysis of the acculturation of native populations under the influence of these nations. There is some tendency to meet the difficulty by borrowing concepts and methods from the other social sciences which have had long experience in dealing with contemporary societies. Where this leads to new interdisciplinary approaches it is healthy scientific development, but often it appears that anthropologists are ready to abandon the unique methods of their own science and to imitate the other social sciences. While there is no objection to cross-disciplinary fertilization, it should be possible to revise basic anthropological concepts and methods to meet the needs of the new and enlarged subject matter so long as the problem is cultural.

The greatest need is an adequate conceptualization of the phenomena of sociocultural systems above the tribal level. Because anthropology is distinctive in its primary concern with culture—a concept which perhaps represents its greatest contribution to the social sciences—it seems to be widely held that a general definition of culture is sufficient to dictate problem and method in the study of *any* culture. There would probably be no great disagreement with the bare statement that culture consists of learned modes of behavior that are socially transmitted from one generation to the next and from one society or individual to another. To have operational utility, however, this definition would have to be modified in the case of each particular kind of culture. Anthropology's present working definition of culture was devised largely for the study of preliterate, primitive societies, and it does not at all meet certain needs in the analysis of more complicated contemporary cultures.

The concept of primitive or "tribal" culture is based on three fundamental aspects of the behavior of members of tribal societies. First, it is a construct that represents the ideal, norm, average, or expectable behavior of all members of a fairly small, simple, independent, self-contained, and homogeneous society. It is a norm derived from the somewhat varied or deviant modes of individual behavior. It represents essential

uniformities which are shared by all persons, despite some special modes of behavior associated with age, sex, occupation, and other roles; for there are definite and fairly narrow limits to deviant behavior in most tribal cultural activities. Tribal society is not divisible into genuine sub-cultural groups which have a quasi-independent existence and distinctive way of life. The concept of tribal culture emphasizes shared behavior.

Second, tribal culture is usually said to have a pattern or configuration. Pattern has a considerable variety of meanings but it seems generally intended to express some underlying consistency and unity, some over-all integration. Pattern should perhaps connote structuring; but it is difficult to express structure concretely except in terms of some special component of culture, such as social organization. Benedict met this difficulty by conceiving pattern as synonymous with basic attitudes, life view, or value system shared by all tribal members and thereby giving uniformity to behavior. It is a natural step from this definition of pattern to the concept of cultural personality; for attitudes are an expression of a personality type which has been produced by cultural uniformities. Emphasis is again upon shared characteristics, although the auxiliary concept of status- and role-personality is introduced to explain certain special deviants.

Third, the concept of tribal culture is essentially relativistic. The culture of any particular tradition—the norm and the pattern manifest in the tradition—is seen in contrast to cultures of other traditions. It is viewed as unique. The tendency to emphasize the persistence of patterns—and usually also of content—within a tradition plays down the qualitative differences between developmental levels or stages.

Conceptualization of tribal culture in terms of its normative, patterned, and relativistic aspects has been a useful tool for analysis and comparison, especially when contrasts are sought. But as a tool for dealing with culture change it has found little utility, even on the primitive level. Archaeology has continued to deal primarily with element lists, and even ethnology has relied extensively upon element distributions in attempting to reconstruct cultural history by means of the age-area hypothesis. It is significant that the more functional and genuinely holistic ethnological approaches have either stressed the normative and persistent quality of primitive cultures—and in many cases been forthrightly antihistorical or unhistorical—or, if dealing with a culture that has been greatly altered under the influence of modern nations, have paid primary attention to the disruption, imbalance, and internal conflicts of the culture. In cases where the native culture has been substantially changed but has not broken down, the concept of pattern is usually abandoned and acculturation is treated in terms of categories of elements, that is, subpatterns, such as religion, economics, social organization, and the like.

In the analysis of cultural change and acculturation of more complicated sociocultural systems, there are phenomena which cannot be handled by the normative and relativistic concept of culture. The culture of a modern nation is not simply a behavioral norm, which may be ascertained by the observation of all or of a significant sample of individuals. Different groups of individuals are substantially dissimilar in many respects. They have subcultures, which is a concept that has long been understood but surprisingly disregarded in social science. Moreover, certain aspects of a modern culture can best be studied quite apart from individual behavior. The structure and function of a system of money, banking, and credit, for example, represents supra-individual aspects of culture. To say that in the final analysis a banking system, like all culture, exists in the minds of men is not to say that its operation can best be ascertained by using an ethnographic or psychological method to study the behavior of bankers. The system not only has complicated rules, regulations, and principles of its own, but it cannot be understood without reference to world trade, industrial development, marketing, legal systems, and many other factors. The national aspects of banking can be ascertained from economists who have made them their specialty. It would certainly be approaching the problem in the most difficult way to use the ethnographic method.

Not only is the concept that culture consists only of the common denominator of traits shared by all individuals an inadequate characterization of contemporary sociocultural systems, but the nature of culture patterns found among primitive peoples is by no means applicable to contemporary societies. Nations are not patterned in terms of uniformities of individual behavior. They are extremely heterogeneous entities whose total "pattern" consists of intricately interrelated parts of different kinds. It is only subcultural groups—these might be called subsocieties—whose individual members share a substantial core of behavior.

When tribal acculturation under the influence of a modern nation is being examined, it is wholly inappropriate to view the process simply as replacement of individual tribal behavior (the tribal pattern) by a national core of traits of individual behavior (the so-called national pattern). No individuals or groups of individuals carry an entire national pattern. They participate only in very special portions of the entire culture. They are members of a subculture which has a special relation to the national whole. The "assimilation" of any ethnic minority, therefore, means first that certain traits have been adopted from the particular subcultural group with which the minority had contact and second that certain aspects of the national culture have affected the minority culture to the extent of integrating it as a new subculture, that is, a specialized dependent part of the whole. The process of assimilation is by no means a simple replacement of native features by an entire national pattern. Just

what traits are adopted to constitute the new subculture and how this is integrated into the larger sociocultural whole differ in individual cases.

The following pages will examine some of the different characteristics or aspects of sociocultural systems that are important both in structural-functional analysis of modern societies and in the historical analysis of the developmental succession of qualitatively different kinds of societies.

In order to delineate some of the significant components of contemporary sociocultural systems and thereby to indicate the features that are susceptible to analysis by the ethnographic method, I have previously suggested that these systems can be viewed in terms of levels of sociocultural integration. According to this concept a total national culture is divisible into two general kinds of features: first, those that function and must be studied on a national level; second, those that pertain to sociocultural segments or subgroups of the population. The former include the suprapersonal and more or less structured—and often formally institutionalized—features, such as the form of government, legal system, economic institutions, religious organizations, educational system, law enforcement, military organization, and others. These institutions have aspects which are national and sometimes international in scope and which must be understood apart from the behavior of the individuals connected with them.

The sociocultural segments or subcultural groups of individuals are amenable to the methods of direct observation used by ethnology. There are several categories of such groups in modern states and nations. First there are localized groups, which may result from differentiation that has occurred during national development—for example, subcultures arising from local specialization in production or cultural ecological adaptations—or which may consist of ethnic minorities. The latter may be native inhabitants who have survived from a prenational period or immigrants who brought a distinctive culture into the nation. Second, there are “horizontal” groups, such as castes, classes, occupational divisions, and other segments, which hold status positions in an hierarchical arrangement and usually crosscut localities to some extent. These, too, may represent segments which either have been differentiated during national development or have been incorporated from the outside.

The ethnographic method is applicable to sociocultural segments but not to national institutions. Much recent anthropology has dealt with “nations,” “national culture,” and “national characteristics.” “National” cannot have the same meaning as “tribal,” for many aspects of modern cultures do not represent shared behavior which lends itself to the direct observation of individuals. “National culture” has in fact several special meanings apart from the totality of culture, and it is necessary to distinguish these.

First, "national culture" may signify "cultural products" or national achievements in the fields of science, literature, philosophy, religion, and the like, which presuppose a national level of sociocultural integration. In some societies, these may be limited largely to the upper classes. Thus, national religion, art, writing, and learning in the early irrigation states was produced for and consumed by the upper class far more than for the basic population.

In Latin America, the cultural stereotype is one which emphasizes gracious living, spiritual over material values, political acumen, and other features which of necessity can only be held by an upper class. The subculture of this comparatively small and privileged group has in the past been conditional upon their ownership of wealth, control of most state institutions, and generally superordinate position. While conditions have changed radically in recent decades under industrial influence which has brought business and professional middle and upper class persons into prominence, the national cultural products—philosophy, art, literature, etc.—were largely produced for and consumed by the upper class.

Second, "national culture" may be understood to mean governmental, economic, religious, and other institutions which function on a national scale. Although all members of the society will be affected by these institutions, the effect may be quite different among the various sociocultural segments.

Third, "national culture" may mean the common denominator of behavior that is shared by all members of the nation and that can be ascertained by direct observation of individuals. The method of study requires techniques for sampling large populations, although some use has been made of indirect evidence, such as "cultural content analysis" of novels, motion pictures, and the like. It is not my purpose at present to review the methods for ascertaining the common denominator of national characteristics. I would stress, however, that current research seems to be more concerned with how to ascertain these characteristics than with what they signify. So far as significance is concerned, they are widely supposed, especially by the more psychoanalytically-minded social scientists, to evidence a basic personality or national character which constitutes the mainspring of all national behavior. The national common denominator of shared behavior, however, actually consists of behavior traits of different kinds and origins. For this reason some traits change fairly readily while others, more deeply rooted, are extremely persistent.

If national character is analyzed from the point of view of levels of sociocultural integration, the common denominator will be seen to be affected by the following factors. First, certain behavior and personality traits result from practices of child-rearing. They are acquired by the individual as a member of the family under influences that continue from infancy for many years. In a large heterogeneous society, however, the

families of all sociocultural subgroups will not be essentially similar in child-rearing. The nature of differences is a purely empirical question. Moreover, socialization with respect to the local in-group or community—at least the social community—starts in early childhood, and, unless the individual shifts residence, it continues throughout life. Community patterns of behavior, however, do not affect so deep a level of the personality because they do not involve food, physical comfort and well-being, and security to the extent involved in family behavior. At the same time, these community patterns will be distinctive of the subcultures. It is extremely important, therefore, that nationally shared features of socialization be distinguished from subcultural features which may differ on both the local and family levels.

Second, there is common behavior of all persons within a nation to the extent that they participate in the same national institutions. All individuals presumably obey the same laws, and they may share in some measure national religious, military, social, and other institutions. Nonetheless, these national institutions may have very unlike effects upon members of subcultural groups.

Third, there may be a common denominator that derives from the influence of mass means of communication. In industrialized nations which have state education, general literacy, newspapers, magazines, radio and television which reach nearly everyone, and nationally standardized and syndicated ideals of behavior, certain uniformities of behavior are introduced to all individuals to an extent unimaginable in pre-industrial societies. As yet, however, there is no way to measure the cultural effects of mass communications on a national scale. Indices of use of mass media are suggestive of the extent of their effects—a qualitative estimate—but since the quality or nature of the effects may well depend upon the subcultural context of their consumption, it must be ascertained through detailed ethnographic analysis of the subcultures. While mass media are therefore undoubtedly potent in helping to level subcultural differences, empirical research must also be alert to the probability that their meaning is somewhat repatterned according to the total point of view of the consumer.

The three kinds of traits are not wholly comparable, and each may change somewhat independently of the others. International relations, we know, have changed recently at a vertiginous rate, and the attitudes of individuals toward other nations have changed correspondingly. Attitudes toward internal political ideologies, however, have not undergone similar abrupt transformations. Nevertheless, the latter may change significantly under the pressure of economic factors and the influence of mass communications. Commensurate alteration of family types and ideals does not occur.

The effects of nationally shared practices of child-training and

family patterns, of common participation in national institutions, and of mass communications all serve to develop national uniformities of individual behavior. But, since there remain important regional occupational, ethnic, class, and other differences it cannot be assumed a priori that the national common denominator so outweighs the subcultural differences in importance that individual behavior can be adequately understood with reference solely to the former. A modern society is extremely heterogeneous, and even the common denominator of shared behavior is a composite, a machine of wheels within wheels, some turning faster than others and each geared to some different aspect of national institutions. A broad definition of national culture, therefore, must include many different kinds of features.

The distinctions between the different aspects of national culture clearly imply that a great many different methods must be used to study any national culture in its totality. The problem of how to study a national culture does not ordinarily arise in most of the social sciences. Except anthropology and sociology, the social science disciplines and humanities usually deal with special categories of data representing state or national-level aspects of culture, e.g., economics, political science, philosophy, science, and others. While these disciplines at times relate their state- or national-level institutions to local behavior or the "grass roots," their emphasis is upon the former, and local differences are of interest as they affect specific institutions and not as they manifest total subcultures. These categories of data represent only portions of a national culture. Each category has manifestations on the national level and on the level of the subcultural groups. Religion, for example, may have a state or even international organization and a formal doctrine—viz. Catholicism—but it also has a great variety of local meanings and manifestations. The utility of distinguishing levels of sociocultural integration as well as categories of phenomena can be strikingly illustrated in studies of culture change and acculturation.

In the growth continuum of any culture, there is a succession of organizational types which are not only increasingly complex but which represent new emergent forms. The concept is fairly similar to that of organizational levels in biology. In culture, simple forms, such as those represented by the family or band, do not wholly disappear when a more complex stage of development is reached, nor do they merely survive fossil-like, as the concepts of folkways and mores formerly assumed. They gradually become modified as specialized, dependent parts of new kinds of total configurations. The many-faceted national culture previously delineated represents a very high developmental level.

The application of the concept of developmental levels, or emergent evolution, to cultural phenomena is not new. The idea that "advanced" cultures are differently integrated than "simple" cultures is

implicit in most studies; but its methodological utility has been pretty much ignored. A reason for this may be that it suggests the now widely discredited schemes of cultural evolution. The concept of levels of integration does not presuppose any particular evolutionary sequence. In biology, the concept that higher levels of life have different organizing principles than lower ones is in no way concerned with the evolution of particular life forms, such as birds, mammals, or reptiles. Similarly, this concept applied to culture is essentially heuristic and does not purport to explain the developmental sequences of particular cultural types. The cultural evolution of Morgan, Tylor, and others is a developmental taxonomy based on concrete characteristics of cultures. The concept of levels of socio-cultural integration, on the other hand, is simply a methodological tool for dealing with cultures of different degrees of complexity. It is not a conclusion about evolution.

Another obstacle to acceptance of the concept of levels of socio-cultural integration is the very strong hold of the concept of relativity. So long as the differences between cultural traditions are regarded as the most important qualitative differences, that is, so long as each culture area is seen primarily in terms of a fixed pattern which endures throughout its history, developmental stages will be thought of in terms only of quantitative differences, as matters of mere complexity. The concept of levels of sociocultural integration provides a new frame of reference and a new meaning to pattern; and it facilitates cross-cultural comparison.

### *The Folk Society as a Level of Integration*

The research value of the concept of levels of sociocultural integration is largely unexplored. The historical approach to cultural studies has been divided mainly between a relativistic emphasis upon the continuity of traditional patterns of local areas without regard to succession of qualitatively different levels and upon postulation of universal evolutionary stages without regard to local differences.

An outstanding contribution which bears directly upon the problem of integrational levels, even though it approaches it somewhat tangentially, is Redfield's concept of the folk society and the folk culture. The characteristics which Redfield ascribes to folk society and culture and which are presumably attributes of a large number of tribal societies and cultures are more descriptive of a level of integration than of any particular culture type. I judge that Redfield's characterization of the folk society is intended to be applicable to the culture of societies at a certain level of sociocultural integration in wholly different cultural traditions. Further comparative analysis will no doubt require redefinition of the concept, but for the present purposes we can assume that most of the diagnostic features are significant. Folk societies are small,



isolated, close-knit, homogeneous, patterned around kinship relations, oriented toward implicit goals and values, and pervaded by general supernaturalism.

Redfield did not attempt to conceptualize suprafolk levels of sociocultural integration, but in his studies of Yucatan, he uses the urban society as a contrasting type. Subjected to urbanization, the folk society is secularized, individualized, and disorganized. Urbanization, however, is but one of the processes through which a folk society may be integrated into a larger sociocultural system; for cities are but specialized parts of such systems. Some folk societies are incorporated into states and nations as regionally specialized subcultures which do not undergo urbanization at all and which are readapted rather than transformed. Even when the folk society is transformed, the individual is not only secularized, individualized, and disorganized but he adopts scientific or naturalistic explanations in place of supernatural ones, he participates in occupational, class, ethnic, or other sociocultural segments of the city, and in general he is reintegrated in a new kind of system.

Redfield's concepts of the folk society and the folk culture are based largely on his studies of the Maya Indians of Yucatan. Historically, the Maya villages were once parts of city states and federations, sometimes called "empires," and they became relatively independent after the Spaniards destroyed the state or national superstructure. The evident stability of their society and culture through the upheavals of the Spanish conquest and later events suggest a fairly high degree of integration. Whether the nature of this integration is essentially similar to that of tribal societies and to what is broadly called "folk societies" in other cultural traditions is a question to be answered by comparative, cross-cultural analysis. It is significant that the term "tribal society" remains an exceedingly ill-defined catchall. Once a typology of integrational levels is established empirically, it will be possible to examine the reintegration of simpler societies into larger sociocultural systems and to make generalizations about processes which go beyond what Redfield derived from the process of urbanization.

It is certain that further discriminations will require recognition of integrational levels that are lower than the folk level. The biological or nuclear family represents a level that is lower in a structural sense, and in some cases it appears to have been historically antecedent to higher forms. Among the aboriginal Western Shoshoni and probably most of the Great Basin Shoshoneans, practically all features of the relatively simple culture were integrated and functioned on a family level. The family was the reproductive, economic, educational, political, and religious unit. It reared its children in comparative isolation, obtained its own food, and cared for its members at birth, sickness, death, and other crises. It made its own decisions on virtually all matters. Family de-

pendence upon outsiders was rare and its patterns restricted. The family sometimes called a shaman to treat the sick, co-operated with other families in communal hunts and dances, and visited relatives and friends when the opportunity permitted. But it could and did exist during most of the year without these extrafamilial relations. Extrafamilial dependency represented only a slight tendency toward a higher level of organization; patterns of multifamily unity had not become fixed.

The nuclear family, despite its many varieties, is basic in every modern society, and it seems safe to suppose that it has always been basic. In many cases, it was probably antecedent to the extended family, band, community, and other multifamily forms. In any event, there are probably several levels of sociocultural integration between the family and the folk society which should be distinguished. And above the folk society there are many significantly different levels of integration. For the purpose of the present exposition, however, it is sufficient to discuss only three levels—the nuclear family, the folk society, and the state. These are qualitatively distinctive organizational systems, which represent successive stages in any developmental continuum and constitute special kinds of cultural components within higher sociocultural systems.

Folk societies or multifamily sociocultural systems develop when activities requiring a suprafamily organization appear. Productive processes may become patterned around collective hunting, fishing, herding, or farming. Property rights requiring interfamilial understandings are established. Unity achieved in economic behavior may be reinforced through group ceremonialism, through patterned forms of extended kinship and friendship, and through recreational activities. Society acquires a structure appropriate to the particular kinds of interfamilial relations that develop in the cultural tradition, and patterns of social control and leadership emerge.

One of the most common forms of multifamily integration is an extended kin group of some kind. Not all peoples, however, have a suprafamily organization based on extended kinship. The nuclear family may be integrated directly into a larger, multikin structure.

What may be called roughly a state level of integration is marked by the appearance of new patterns that bring several multifamily aggregates, or folk societies, into functional dependence upon one another within a still larger system. Communities or other sociocultural segments of a folk type may participate in state projects, such as the construction of irrigation works, roads, religious edifices, and so on; they may produce special foods or manufactured objects for exchange with other communities and for state purposes; they may join other communities in offensive and defensive warfare; they may accept state rules, regulations, and standards concerning property, credit, commerce, and other

matters of mutual concern. They frequently accept a state religion. The system of controls arising from economic, military, and religious needs creates a political hierarchy and a social system of classes and statuses. Qualitatively new institutions appear on the state or national level: governmental structure and control of those aspects of life which are of state concern; social stratification; and national cultural achievements. All of these have national aspects that are distinguishable from their varied folk manifestations.

There are many kinds of state sociocultural systems, each having characteristics determined by factors which are peculiar to the area and to the cultural tradition. But all states can be said to represent a broad level of sociocultural organization which is more than the sum total of the families and communities of which it consists.

There is nothing new in the idea that each stage of sociocultural development entails new forms of co-operation and interaction, and that societies may be arranged in general developmental series, such as family, village, and state, *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, and others. But these are primarily taxonomic concepts. The point I wish to stress is that the concept of levels may be used as an analytic tool in the study of changes within any particular sociocultural system, for each system consists of parts which developed at different stages and through different processes and which, though functionally specialized in their dependency upon the whole, continue to integrate certain portions of the culture. The problem of acculturation may be rephrased so that the phenomena can be handled not merely in terms of categories of elements and total patterns but also of functional levels. This is necessary in any acculturation situation involving a modern state or nation, for the different categories of cultural features—religion, economics, government, and the like—cut across the nation, community, class, and family levels and function differently at each. National religions, for example, involve a formal organization and dogma, but their community or class manifestations may be quite varied, while a considerable amount of supernaturalism functions on the individual or family level.

### *Sociocultural Levels in Acculturation Studies*

Three brief examples will suffice in the present chapter to illustrate the utility of the concept of sociocultural levels in acculturational studies, although application of the concept will be evident in all the remaining chapters of this volume. The present examples are offered to show how the concept can be used as a research tool and not to present definitive, substantive results, for little detailed research has been done. Western Shoshoni acculturation exemplifies the influence of a modern nation upon a family level of sociocultural integration. Changes in the

Inca Empire under the Spanish conquest illustrate how the culture of a native state may be more radically affected at the national level than at lower levels. Post-conquest changes in the Circum-Caribbean culture show loss of state functions and deculturation to a folk level.

*Western Shoshoni Acculturation* The distinctive features of Western Shoshoni acculturation are best understood if contrasted to the acculturation of other Indians who had a tribal culture. American Indians since post-white times have been potentially subject to influences from both the national and folk levels of European culture. National institutions affecting the Indian include trade relations, such as markets for furs, farm produce, and craft objects and a source of manufactured goods; governmental services, such as schools, hospitals, work projects, grants of money and goods, and farm extension aid; laws; reservations; and many restrictive measures. In some cases there was armed intervention in tribal affairs. National influences likewise have been introduced through special groups, such as churches. All of these influences were mediated through agents of one kind or another. But the contacts with the agents of the national institutions were rarely so continuous and powerful that the personal behavior patterns of the individual agents were adopted to any appreciable degree by the Indians.

In many cases, however, the Indians came into daily contact with white settlers—miners, farmers, and ranchers—which presented the opportunity for acculturation of each group toward the folk culture of the other. In early times, the white trappers were often strongly acculturated toward the Indian way of life. Later, the white farmers introduced rural American patterns which began to influence the Indians.

The reaction of the Indians to these national and folk or community patterns depended upon their own native level of cultural development. Most Indians had some kind of multifamily organization, some fairly cohesive in-group, from which an individual detached himself to enter the context of the neighboring rural white culture only with difficulty. The reservation is therefore a result as well as a cause of group cohesion. Only the extremely acculturated individuals have been able to break from tribal life and, race prejudice permitting, behave like rural whites.

But native patterns do not necessarily remain intact because individual Indians do not participate in white society. All "tribes" have been brought into a relationship of dependency upon American national culture through economic, governmental, and often religious institutions. In most cases, the influence of the institutions of the larger sociocultural system has been sufficient to destroy the native pattern, often with traumatic effects. It was the most serious weakness of the New Deal policy for the Indians to suppose that an uncontaminated native core of attitudes and values could be preserved while the tribe became increas-

ingly dependent upon national institutions. One of the most tragic cases of present cultural conflict is the Navaho. Their very dependence upon livestock as cash produce for a national market puts them into competition with one another and threatens to destroy the native culture. The situation is aggravated by the limited grazing resources.

The Western Shoshoni were spared the more crucial difficulties experienced by Indians who had a fairly tightly-woven fabric of community culture. When white miners and ranchers entered their country a century ago, individual families readily attached themselves to white communities. When their native hunting and gathering resources were depleted, they worked for wages sufficient to maintain their very low standard of living. Later, they were given reservations, but these consisted of little more than small residence sites. A few who obtained arable land undertook farming in a small way, very like their white neighbors. Most Western Shoshoni, however, were only loosely tied to any definable locality or cohesive social group, for there were no community bonds beyond kinship and friendship. Persons commonly wandered from place to place, covering distances of several hundred miles if they could manage transportation.

On the whole, Western Shoshoni acculturation has come about more through face-to-face association with whites than through governmental services. The influence of schools, health services, work projects, and other federal benefits has been sporadic. Facilities have been poor, and the Indians have been too mobile. Association with rural whites has not been very sustained, but it has been sufficient to acculturate the Shoshoni toward the Great Basin American ranching and mining subculture, especially where economic needs have forced them into the role of nomadic wage laborers. But it has not wiped out all Indian practices. Acculturation has consisted primarily of modification of those patterns necessary to adjust to the rural white culture. It has brought wage labor, white styles of dress, housing, transportation, food, and other material items, use of English and some literacy, and considerable adaptability in dealing with whites, though race prejudice has prevented full participation in white social relations. The Shoshoni retain, however, many practices and beliefs pertaining to kinship relations, child-rearing, shamanism, supernatural powers and magic, and recreation, especially gambling games.

Many other American Indian groups retain features of this kind after other portions of their native culture have been lost. These features, however, are those that functioned on a family level and may survive apart from group patterns. The difference between the Western Shoshoni and most other Indians is that the former did not have to experience the break-up of suprafamily-level institutions. The individual families were quite free to adjust to changed circumstances in the most expedient way

without facing conflict. Perhaps this is why they are generally quite amiable toward the whites, exhibiting no deep-seated hostility.

*Changes in the Inca Empire* At the time of the Spanish conquest, the Inca of the South American Andes had a fairly elaborate empire. The conquest produced radical changes in the national institutions, but the lower levels of the native sociocultural system were affected far less.

The native Inca Empire was controlled through highly centralized political, military, economic, and religious institutions. These had developed in the course of empire growth, national or imperial institutions being imposed upon the local states just as local state institutions had evidently been imposed upon the earlier communities. The Inca institutions affected the states and communities to the extent that it was necessary to make the empire function, but this did not mean that everything at the lower levels had to be changed. Much was left alone. The imperial political structure consisted of a hierarchy of positions, the more important being held by members of the royal family while the lesser were left to native rulers. Community affairs that did not conflict with the state were evidently handled much as in pre-Inca times. Economic production was reorganized under the empire in order to channel a portion of goods and services to the ruling bureaucracy and to the Inca Sun Temple, but the kinds and quantities of goods produced and consumed in the home and village were not greatly changed, except perhaps through the introduction of methods of quantity production. The Inca Sun God was forced upon all communities as the supreme deity, but local gods, cults, and rites and household fetishes, shrines and beliefs were not disturbed.

Under the conquest, Spanish national institutions replaced those of the Inca, but the lower levels of native culture were not so drastically altered. Spaniards took over the key positions in the political hierarchy and Spanish law was imposed to the extent necessary to maintain the Spanish institutions. But many native rulers were retained in lower positions and a large portion of village activities went on as in native times. Spanish economic patterns introduced a system of cash produce, money, credit, and commerce, but Spanish policy was designed at first primarily to drain off wealth, especially gold, for the Spanish Crown and the upper classes. Instead of contributing goods and services to the Inca ruling classes, the common people were drafted into the mines to produce gold for export and were forced to pay tribute in various forms to their conquerors. Once these obligations were discharged, however, village and family affairs seem to have been carried on in traditional ways.

Spanish religion likewise affected the Inca culture differently at different levels. The Catholic Church, which in feudal Spain had sanctioned and implemented state policies, completely replaced the Inca sun cult, for it could not tolerate a rival national religion. All Peruvians became

nominal Catholics, accepting the Christian God and saints and contributing to Church support, but they did not abandon local shrines, ancestor worship, household gods, shamanism, and other lower level forms of religion. And the Catholic fathers were content to regard these community and family practices as mere "paganism," which was innocuous provided it did not threaten the state religion.

Modern, republican Peru is very different from sixteenth-century colonial Peru, but a great deal of native community and family culture has survived in the areas least touched by commercialism. Over the centuries, however, national economic patterns have struck deeply at the heart of community culture. The production of cash crops, both by independent small farmers and by plantation wage laborers, has linked the people to the national society. Wage labor in pottery, textile, and other factories, service in the army, work on roads and other government projects, and adoption of many cash-oriented occupations, together with loss of lands, is destroying the basis of the native communities and converting the mass of the Indians into a national laboring class. The local sociocultural segments are being replaced by class subcultural groups which extend horizontally across communities. This trend is occurring in all parts of the world as native populations are drawn into the orbit of an industrial world through specialized production of cash commodities.

*Post-conquest Changes in the Circum-Caribbean Culture* Among certain of the Circum-Caribbean Indians, the Spanish conquest destroyed native state institutions without effectively substituting Hispanic national patterns. These people were consequently deculturated to a community level of sociocultural organization.

This deculturative process may be illustrated by the Cuna-Cueva Indians of the Isthmus of Panama. Archaeological evidence and historical documents show that at the time of the conquest these Indians had a rather elaborate state organization. There was a ruling class consisting of chiefs and nobles whose status is evidenced by rich burials. These rulers were interred with several wives or retainers and a wealth of luxury goods, including gold objects, carved stone, pearls, precious stones, and ceramics. The priests were also members of the upper class, and they presided over a cult which depended in part upon human sacrifice. Since prisoners of war were used as sacrificial victims, warriors could achieve some upward mobility of status through taking captives. The common people were the farmers and the artisans who produced luxury goods for the state. At the bottom of the scale were some kind of so-called slaves, apparently female captives and perhaps those males who were not sacrificed.

The Spanish conquest struck the Cuna with sufficient force to wipe out the national or state institutions. Military expeditions eliminated the upper classes and confiscated their wealth. Human sacrifice and the

state religion based on it were suppressed. But Spanish rule and the Catholic Church were not very effectively substituted for the native institutions, for the people moved into regions where the Spaniards did not care to follow. Left comparatively unmolested and yet unable to maintain state functions, the Cuna resumed life on a community basis. The content and organization of the Cuna community in recent times is strikingly like that of the Tropical Forest Indians of South America, and it must be assumed that this type of culture was always part of the more elaborate Circum-Caribbean state organization. Today, the Cuna farm for home consumption and make their own fairly simple household goods and utensils. The luxury objects were no longer made after the upper classes for which they were intended were wiped out. The manufactures now include pole-and-thatched houses, dugout canoes, baskets, simple pottery, and bark cloth. The village is the largest political unit, and it is controlled by a headman assisted by one or more shamans. These shamans do not have the priestly functions of the native Cuna, for loss of state religion has left little more than a simple village religion which centers around girls' puberty ceremonies and death rites.

### *Conclusions*

In the three cases just described, much of the significance of the acculturation would have been lost if changes in the native society had been viewed solely in terms of a monolithic concept of total cultural pattern or configuration. Whether the substantive conclusions suggested are correct or not, it is clear that cultural and social interaction take place on different levels. National, community, and family levels were selected for illustration, but there are no doubt other levels which will have greater significance for certain problems.

The concept of levels of sociocultural integration is a conclusion about culture change only in the sense that there do appear to be phenomena which cannot be explained by any other frame of reference. Any aspect of culture—economic, social, political, or religious—has different meanings when viewed in terms of its national functions and its special manifestations in different subcultures. Stated differently, the individual's participation in culture is of a somewhat different order at the family, community, and national levels. As a member of the family, he is concerned with the most basic human needs—procreation, subsistence, child-rearing, sickness, and death. Even where community or state institutions intervene to assist the family, these functions still remain the primary reason for the existence of the family. Because they are directly concerned with biological survival, they are charged with emotions—emotions involving sex, hunger, fear of sickness and death, and social anxieties. In the development of the individual, they are among the earliest learned and the most deeply ingrained attitudes. This presumably is



why behavior which functions on a family level is the most difficult to change in a changing culture.

The individual, of course, reacts as a total person in his functions as a member of the family, community, and nation. Nevertheless, community functions may develop without completely altering the family. New patterns of co-operation and social interaction lift certain responsibilities from the family and make it a specialized dependency of a larger sociocultural unit. But they by no means supersede all of its functions.

State functions, too, may be mediated to the individual through the community or they may reach him directly. But he does not surrender his role in the family and community by virtue of becoming a member of a nation. His relationship to the nation is specialized according to the subculture of his local group or class.

The inference of these observations for studies of national characteristics and national character is clear. Personal behavior is not something that can be understood simply by studying random samples of the total national population. The several aspects of national culture previously defined—national institutions, national cultural achievements, subcultural patterns, family patterns, behavior in situations involving different subcultural groups, and the common denominator—should be distinguished and the role of each appraised. The significance of each of these aspects will depend upon the particular culture, and for this reason proper conceptualization of the culture studied is essential.

These comments on the usefulness of the concept of levels of sociocultural organization to studies of national characteristics and national character are offered because such studies have wide current interest. The concept, however, will have value to another problem or objective of anthropology which will surely become of major importance in the future. The search for cross-culturally valid laws or regularities has suffered as much for want of adequate methodological tools as for lack of interest. So long as developmental stages within any cultural tradition are regarded primarily as quantitative differences and the traditions are assumed to be qualitatively unique, formulation of cross-culturally significant regularities is foredoomed. If, however, stages are recognized as qualitatively distinctive, the way is clear to establish developmental typologies that are valid for more than one cultural tradition. Even if this typology were based solely on general forms of the kind I have discussed, it would facilitate the analysis of the processes of change from one form to another. Distinction of levels of internal organization within sociocultural systems would also facilitate the discovery of regularities. Instead of dealing with total configurations, which are made virtually unique by definition, it would be possible to isolate special components, which, having been analyzed in their relation to the whole, could safely be compared with similar components in other cultural traditions.

## 30 *The Folk Society*



Robert Redfield

THOUGH APPARENTLY UNNOTICED FOR A DECADE, THE INTRODUCTORY REMARKS to this article in the first edition of the Readings included a truly egregious error. It was not a matter of one or a few words, but the general way in which this piece was presented. True, the existence of severe criticisms by Oscar Lewis, Sidney Mintz, Gideon Sjoberg, George Foster and Eric Wolf was acknowledged. But the primary reason for presenting "The Folk Society" was given as its firm ethnographic basis. Although the article deals with ideal types, Redfield, said the editor, had derived the folk-urban continuum essentially from fieldwork, although his acknowledgment of prior writers on similar topics, such as Ferdinand Tönnies, was pointed out. In fact, there was not a firm ethnographic basis. The most serious criticisms were directed, at least implicitly, against Redfield's fieldwork. Central to the discussion was the fact that the folk-urban contrast was based on an idealization of the folk end and equal but opposite distortions in the picturing of the urban end. Redfield improved on his predecessors by leaving his armchair and going to the field, but he failed in the last analysis because he didn't tell it like it is.

Still, the article can be included again without apology, particularly

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Originally trained in the law, Robert Redfield (1897-1958) was Professor of Anthropology at the University of Chicago. He did fieldwork in Mexico and India and was noted for his insistence on combining humanism and cultural anthropology. Among his publications are *The Folk Culture of Yucatan* (1941); *Tepotzlan: A Mexican Village* (1930); *A Village That Chose Progress* (1950); *The Primitive World and Its Transformations* (1953) and *The Little Community* (1955).

*because its main flaw is revealed. Redfield's work stimulated a discussion whose ramifications are with us yet. Furthermore, societal models do not necessarily have to be correct in order to be useful. By isolating and exaggerating certain social features they can trigger the critical work which must underlie a more accurate analysis.*

## 1

Understanding of society in general and of our own modern urbanized society in particular can be gained through consideration of the societies least like our own: the primitive, or folk, societies. All societies are alike in some respects, and each differs from others in other respects; the further assumption made here is that folk societies have certain features in common which enable us to think of them as a type—a type which contrasts with the society of the modern city.

This type is ideal, a mental construction. No known society precisely corresponds with it, but the societies which have been the chief interest of the anthropologist most closely approximate it. The construction of the type depends, indeed, upon special knowledge of tribal and peasant groups. The ideal folk society could be defined through assembling, in the imagination, the characters which are logically opposite those which are to be found in the modern city, only if we had first some knowledge of nonurban peoples to permit us to determine what, indeed, are the characteristic features of modern city living. The complete procedure requires us to gain acquaintance with many folk societies in many parts of the world and to set down in words general enough to describe most of them those characteristics which they have in common with each other and which the modern city does not have.

In short, we move from folk society to folk society, asking ourselves what it is about them that makes them like each other and different from the modern city. So we assemble the elements of the ideal type. The more elements we add, the less will any one real society correspond to it. As the type is constructed, real societies may be arranged in an order of degree of resemblance to it. The conception develops that any one real society is more or less "folk." But the more elements we add, the less possible it becomes to arrange real societies in a single order of degree of resemblance to the type, because one of two societies will be found to resemble the ideal type strongly in one character and weakly in another, while in the next society strong resemblance will lie in the latter character and not in the former. This situation, however, is an advantage, for it enables us to ask and perhaps answer questions, first, as to whether certain characters tend to be found together in most societies, and then, if certain of them do, why.

Anyone attempting to describe the ideal folk society must take account of and in large degree include certain characterizations which have been made of many students, each of whom has been attentive to some but not to all aspects of the contrast between folk and modern urban society. Certain students have derived the characterization from examination of a number of folk societies and have generalized upon them in the light of contrast provided by modern urban society; the procedure defined above and followed by the writer. This is illustrated by Goldenweiser's characterization of five primitive societies. He says that they are small, isolated, nonliterate; that they exhibit local cultures; that they are relatively homogeneous with regard to the distribution of knowledge, attitudes, and functions among the population; that the individual does not figure as a conspicuous unit; and that knowledge is not explicitly systematized.

In other cases the students have compared the state of certain societies at an early time with the same, or historical descendant of the same society at a later time. In this way Maine arrived at his influential contrasts between society based on kinship and society based on territory, and between a society of status and one of contract. In the case of this procedure, as in the case of the next, broad and illuminating conceptions are offered us to apply to folk societies as we contrast them with modern urban society. We are to find out if one of the contrasting terms is properly applicable to folk society and the other term to modern urban society.

In the work of still other students there is apparent no detailed comparison of folk with urbanized societies or of early society with later; rather, by inspection of our own society or of society in general, contrasting aspects of all society are recognized and named. This procedure is perhaps never followed in the unqualified manner just described, for in the instances about to be mentioned there is evidence that folk or ancient society has been compared with modern urbanized society. Nevertheless, the emphasis placed by men of this group is upon characteristics which, contrasting logically, in real fact coexist in every society and help to make it up. Here belongs Tönnies' contrast between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, or that aspect of society which appears in the relations that develop without the deliberate intention of anyone out of the mere fact that men live together, as contrasted with that aspect of society which appears in the relations entered into deliberately by independent individuals through agreement to achieve certain recognized ends. Comparable is Durkheim's distinction between that social solidarity which results from the sharing of common attitudes and sentiments and that which results from the complementary functional usefulnesses of the members of the group. In the "social segment"—the form of society existing in terms of "mechanical solidarity"—the law is "repressive"; in

the "social organ"—the form of society existing in terms of "organic solidarity"—the law is "restitutive."

It may be asked how closely the constructed type arrived at by any one investigator who follows the procedure sketched above will resemble that reached by another doing the same. It may be supposed that to the extent to which the real societies examined by the one investigator constitute a sample of the range and variety of societies similar to the sample constituted by the societies examined by the other, and to the extent that the general conceptions tentatively held by the one are similar to those held by the other, the results will be (except as modified by other factors) the same. For the purposes of understanding which are served by the method of the constructed type, however, it is not necessary to consider the question. The type is an imagined entity, created only because through it we may hope to understand reality. Its function is to suggest aspects of real societies which deserve study, and especially to suggest hypotheses as to what, under certain defined conditions, may be generally true about society. Any ideal type will do, although it is safe to assert that that ideal construction has most heuristic value which depends on close and considered knowledge of real folk societies and which is guided by an effective scientific imagination—whatever that may be.

## 2

"The conception of a 'primitive society' which we ought to form," wrote Sumner, "is that of small groups scattered over a territory." The folk society is a small society. There are no more people in it than can come to know each other well, and they remain in long association with each other. Among the Western Shoshone the individual parental family was the group which went about, apart from other families, collecting food; a group of families would assemble and so remain for a few weeks, from time to time, to hunt together; during the winter months such a group of families would form a single camp. Such a temporary village included perhaps a hundred people. The hunting or food-collecting bands considered by Steward, representing many parts of the world, contained, in most cases, only a few score people. A Southwestern Pueblo contained no more than a few thousand persons.

The folk society is an isolated society. Probably there is no real society whose members are in complete ignorance of the existence of people other than themselves; the Andamanese, although their islands were avoided by navigators for centuries, knew of outsiders and occasionally came in contact with Malay or Chinese visitors. Nevertheless, the folk societies we know are made up of people who have little communication with outsiders, and we may conceive of the ideal folk society as composed of persons having communication with no outsider.

This isolation is one half of a whole of which the other half is intimate communication among the members of the society. A group of recent castaways is a small and isolated society, but it is not a folk society; and if the castaways have come from different ships and different societies, there will have been no previous intimate communication among them, and the society will not be composed of people who are much alike.

May the isolation of the folk society be identified with the physical immobility of its members? In building this ideal type, we may conceive of the members of the society as remaining always within the small territory they occupy. There are some primitive peoples who have dwelt from time immemorial in the same small valley, and who rarely leave it. Certain of the pueblos of the American Southwest have been occupied by the same people or their descendants for many generations. On the other hand, some of the food-collecting peoples, such as the Shoshone Indians and certain aborigines of Australia, move about within a territory of very considerable extent; and there are Asiatic folk groups that make regular seasonal migrations hundreds of miles in extent.

It is possible to conceive of the members of such a society as moving about physically without communicating with members of other groups than their own. Each of the Indian villages of the midwest highlands of Guatemala is a folk society distinguishable by its customs and even by the physical type of its members from neighboring villages, yet the people are great travelers, and in the case of one of the most distinct communities, Chichicastenango, most of the men travel far and spend much of their time away from home. This does not result, however, in much intimate communication between those traveling villagers and other peoples. The gipsies have moved about among the various peoples of the earth for generations, and yet they retain many of the characteristics of a folk society.

Through books the civilized people communicate with the minds of other people and other times, and an aspect of the isolation of the folk society is the absence of books. The folk communicate only by word of mouth; therefore the communication upon which understanding is built is only that which takes place among neighbors, within the little society itself. The folk has no access to the thought and experience of the past, whether of other peoples or of their own ancestors, such as books provide. Therefore, oral tradition has no check or competitor. Knowledge of what has gone before reaches no further back than memory and speech between old and young can make it go; behind "the time of our grandfathers" all is legendary and vague. With no form of belief established by written record, there can be no historical sense, such as civilized people have, no theology, and no basis for science in recorded experiment. The only form of accumulation of experience, except the tools and other enduring articles of manufacture, is the increase of wisdom which

comes as the individual lives longer; therefore the old, knowing more than the young can know until they too have lived that long, have prestige and authority.

The people who make up a folk society are much alike. Having lived in long intimacy with one another, and with no others, they have come to form a single biological type. The somatic homogeneity of local, inbred populations has been noted and studied. Since the people communicate with one another and with no others, one man's learned ways of doing and thinking are the same as another's. Another way of putting this is to say that in the ideal folk society, what one man knows and believes is the same as what all men know and believe. Habits are the same as customs. In real fact, of course, the differences among individuals in a primitive group and the different chances of experience prevent this ideal state of things from coming about. Nevertheless, it is near enough to the truth for the student of a real folk society to report it fairly well by learning what goes on in the minds of a few of its members, and a primitive group has been presented, although sketchily, as learned about from a single member. The similarity among the members is found also as one generation is compared with its successor. Old people find young people doing, as they grow up, what the old people did at the same age, and what they have come to think right and proper. This is another way of saying that in such a society there is little change.

The members of the folk society have a strong sense of belonging together. The group which an outsider might recognize as composed of similar persons different from members of other groups is also the group of people who see their own resemblances and feel correspondingly united. Communicating intimately with each other, each has a strong claim on the sympathies of the others. Moreover, against such knowledge as they have of societies other than their own, they emphasize their own mutual likeness and value themselves as compared with others. They say of themselves "we" as against all others, who are "they."

Thus we may characterize the folk society as small, isolated, nonliterate, and homogeneous, with a strong sense of group solidarity. Are we not soon to acknowledge the simplicity of the technology of the ideal folk society? Something should certainly be said about the tools and tool-making of this generalized primitive group, but it is not easy to assign a meaning to "simple," in connection with technology which will do justice to the facts as known from the real folk societies. The preciseness with which each tool, in a large number of such tools, meets its needs in the case of the Eskimo, for example, makes one hesitate to use the word "simple." Some negative statements appear to be safe: secondary and tertiary tools—tools to make tools—are relatively few as compared with primary tools; there is no making of artifacts by multiple, rapid, machine manufacture; there is little or no use of natural power.

There is not much division of labor in the folk society: what one person does is what another does. In the ideal folk society all the tools and ways of production are shared by everybody. The "everybody" must mean "every adult man" or "every adult woman," for the obvious exception to the homogeneity of the folk society lies in the differences between what men do and know and what women do and know. These differences are clear and unexceptional (as compared with our modern urban society where they are less so). "Within the local group there is no such thing as a division of labor save as between the sexes," writes Radcliffe-Brown about the Andaman Islanders. ". . . Every man is expected to be able to hunt pig, to harpoon turtle and to catch fish, and also to cut a canoe, to make bows and arrows and all the other objects that are made by men." So all men share the same interests and have, in general, the same experience of life.

We may conceive, also, of the ideal folk society as a group economically independent of all others: the people produce what they consume and consume what they produce. Few, if any, real societies are completely in this situation; some Eskimo groups perhaps most closely approach it. Although each little Andamanese band could get along without getting anything from any other, exchange of goods occurred between bands by a sort of periodic gift-giving.

The foregoing characterizations amount, roughly, to saying that the folk society is a little world off by itself, a world in which the recurrent problems of life are met by all its members in much the same way. This statement, while correct enough, fails to emphasize an important, perhaps the most important, aspect of the folk society. The ways in which the members of the society meet the recurrent problems of life are conventionalized ways; they are the results of long intercommunication within the group in the face of these problems; and these conventionalized ways have become interrelated within one another so that they constitute a coherent and self-consistent system. Such a system is what we mean in saying that the folk society is characterized by "a culture." A culture is an organization or integration of conventional understandings. It is, as well, the acts and the objects, in so far as they represent the type characteristic of that society, which express and maintain these understandings. In the folk society this integrated whole, this system, provides for all the recurrent needs of the individual from birth to death and of the society through the seasons and the years. The society is to be described, and distinguished from others, largely by presenting this system.

This is not the same as saying, as was said early in this paper, that in the folk society what one man does is the same as what another man does. What one man does in a mob is the same as what another man does, but a mob is not a folk society. It is, so far as culture is concerned, its very antithesis. The members of a mob (which is a kind of "mass") each do



the same thing, it is true, but it is a very immediate and particular thing, and it is done without much reference to tradition. It does not depend upon and express a great many conventional understandings related to one another. A mob has no culture. The folk society exhibits culture to the greatest conceivable degree. A mob is an aggregation of people doing the same simple thing simultaneously. A folk society is an organization of people doing many different things successively as well as simultaneously. The members of a mob act with reference to the same object of attention. The members of a folk society are guided in acting by previously established comprehensive and interdependent conventional understandings; at any one time they do many different things, which are complexly related to one another to express collective sentiments and conceptions. When the turn comes for the boy to do what a man does, he does what a man does; thus, though in the end the experiences of all individuals of the same sex are alike, the activities of the society, seen at a moment of time, are diverse, while interdependent and consistent.

The Papago Indians, a few hundred of them, constituted a folk society in southern Arizona. Among these Indians a war party was not so simple a thing as a number of men going out together to kill the enemy. It was a complex activity involving everybody in the society both before, during, and after the expedition and dramatizing the religious and moral ideas fundamental to Papago life. Preparation for the expedition involved many practical or ritual acts on the part of the immediate participants, their wives and children, previously successful warriors, and many others. While the party was away, the various relatives of the warriors had many things to do or not to do—prayer, fasting, preparation of ritual paraphernalia, etc. These were specialized activities, each appropriate to just that kind of relative or other category of person. So the war was waged by everybody. These activities, different and special as they were, interlocked, so to speak, with each other to make a large whole, the society-during-a-war-expedition. And all these specialized activities obeyed fundamental principles, understood by all and expressed and reaffirmed in the very forms of the acts—the gestures of the rituals, the words of songs, the implied or expressed explanations and admonitions of the elders to the younger people. All understood that the end in view was the acquisition by the group of the supernatural power of the slain enemy. This power, potentially of great positive value, was dangerous, and the practices and rituals had as their purposes first the success of the war party and then the draining-off of the supernatural power acquired by the slaying into a safe and “usable” form.

We may say, then, that in the folk society conventional behavior is strongly patterned: it tends to conform to a type or a norm. These patterns are interrelated in thought and in action with one another, so that one tends to evoke others and to be consistent with the others. Every

customary act among the Papago when the successful warriors return is consistent with and is a special form of the general conceptions held as to supernatural power. We may still further say that the patterns of what people think should be done are closely consistent with what they believe is done, and that there is one way, or a very few conventional ways, in which everybody has some understanding and some share, of meeting each need that arises. The culture of a folk society is, therefore, one of those wholes which is greater than its parts. Gaining a livelihood takes support from religion, and the relations of men to men are justified in the conceptions held of the supernatural world or in some other aspect of the culture. Life, for the member of the folk society, is not one activity and then another and different one; it is one large activity out of which one part may not be separated without affecting the rest.

A related characteristic of the folk society was implied when it was declared that the specialized activities incident to the Papago war party obeyed fundamental principles understood by all. These "principles" had to do with the ends of living, as conceived by the Papago. A near-ultimate good for the Papago was the acquisition of supernatural power. This end was not questioned; it was a sort of axiom in terms of which many lesser activities were understood. This suggests that we may say of the folk society that its ends are taken as given. The activities incident to the war party may be regarded as merely complementarily useful acts, aspects of the division of labor. They may also, and more significantly, be seen as expressions of unquestioned common ends. The folk society exists not so much in the exchange of useful functions as in common understandings as to the ends given. The ends are not stated as matters of doctrine, but are implied by the many acts which make up the living that goes on in the society. Therefore, the morale of a folk society—its power to act consistently over periods of time and to meet crises effectively is not dependent upon discipline exerted by force or upon devotion to some single principle of action but to the concurrence and consistency of many or all of the actions and conceptions which make up the whole round of life. In the trite phrase, the folk society is a "design for living."

What is done in the ideal folk society is done not because somebody or some people decided, at once, that it should be done, but because it seems "necessarily" to flow from the very nature of things. There is, moreover, no disposition to reflect upon traditional acts and consider them objectively and critically. In short, behavior in the folk society is traditional, spontaneous, and uncritical. In any real folk society, of course, many things are done as a result of decision as to that particular action, but as to that class of actions tradition is the sufficient authority. The Indians decide now to go on a hunt; but it is not a matter of debate whether or not one should, from time to time, hunt.

The folkways are the ways that grow up out of long and intimate

association of men with each other; in the society of our conception all the ways are folkways. Men act with reference to each other by understandings which are tacit and traditional. There are no formal contracts or other agreements. The rights and obligations of the individual come about not by special arrangement; they are, chiefly, aspects of the position of the individual as a person of one sex or the other, one age-group or another, one occupational group or another, and as one occupying just that position in a system of relationships which are traditional in the society. The individual's status is thus in large part fixed at birth; it changes as he lives, but it changes in ways which were "foreordained" by the nature of his particular society. The institutions of the folk society are of the sort which has been called "crescive"; they are not of the sort that is created deliberately for special purposes, as was the juvenile court. So, too, law is made up of the traditional conceptions of rights and obligations and the customary procedures whereby these rights and obligations are assured; legislation has no part in it.

If legislation has no part in the law of the ideal folk society, neither has codification, still less jurisprudence. Radin has collected material suggesting the limited extent to which real primitive people do question custom and do systematize their knowledge. In the known folk societies they do these things only to a limited extent. In the ideal folk society there is no objectivity and no systematization of knowledge as guided by what seems to be its "internal" order. The member of this mentally constructed society does not stand off from his customary conduct and subject it to scrutiny apart from its meaning for him as that meaning is defined in culture. Nor is there any habitual exercise of classification, experiment, and abstraction for its own sake, least of all for the sake of intellectual ends. There is common practical knowledge, but there is no science.

Behavior in the folk society is highly conventional, custom fixes the rights and duties of individuals, and knowledge is not critically examined or objectively and systematically formulated; but it must not be supposed that primitive man is a sort of automaton in which custom is the main-spring. It would be as mistaken to think of primitive man as strongly aware that he is constrained by custom. Within the limits set by custom there is invitation to excel in performance. There is lively competition, a sense of opportunity, and a feeling that what the culture moves one to do is well worth doing. "There is no drabness in such a life. It has about it all the allurements of personal experience, very much one's own, of competitive skill, of things well done." The interrelations and high degree of consistency among the elements of custom which are presented to the individual declare to him the importance of making his endeavors in the directions indicated by tradition. The culture sets goals which stimulate action by giving great meaning to it.

It has been said that the folk society is small and that its members have lived in long and intimate association with one another. It has also been said that in such societies there is little critical or abstract thinking. These characteristics are related to yet another characteristic of the folk society: behavior is personal, not impersonal. A "person" may be defined as that social object which I feel to respond to situations as I do, with all the sentiments and interests which I feel to be my own; a person is myself in another form, his qualities and values are inherent within him, and his significance for me is not merely one of utility. A "thing," on the other hand, is a social object which has no claim upon my sympathies, which responds to me, as I conceive it, mechanically; its value for me exists in so far as it serves my end. In the folk society all human beings admitted to the society are treated as persons; one does not deal impersonally ("thing-fashion") with any other participant in the little world of that society. Moreover, in the folk society much besides human beings is treated personally. The pattern of behavior which is first suggested by the inner experience of the individual—his wishes, fears, sensitivenesses, and interests of all sorts—is projected into all objects with which he comes into contact. Thus nature, too, is treated personally: the elements, the features of the landscape, the animals, and especially anything in the environment which by its appearance or behavior suggests that it has the attributes of mankind—to all these are attributed qualities of the human person.

In short, the personal and intimate life of the child in the family is extended, in the folk society, into the social world of the adult and even into inanimate objects. It is not merely that relations in such a society are personal; it is also that they are familial. The first contacts made as the infant becomes a person are with other persons; moreover, each of these first persons, he comes to learn, has a particular kind of relation to him which is associated with that one's genealogical position. The individual finds himself fixed within a constellation of familial relationships. The kinship connections provide a pattern in terms of which, in the ideal folk society, all personal relations are conventionalized and categorized. All relations are personal. But relations are not, in content of specific behavior, the same for everyone. As a mother is different from a father, and a grandson from a nephew, so are these classes of personal relationship, originating in genealogical connection, extended outward into all relationships whatever. In this sense, the folk society is a familial society. Lowie has demonstrated the qualification that is to be introduced into the statement of Maine that the primitive society is organized in terms of kinship rather than territory. It is true that the fact that men are neighbors contributes to their sense of belonging together. But the point to be emphasized in understanding the folk society is that whether mere contiguity or relationship as brother or as son is the circumstance uniting

men into the society, the result is a group of people among whom prevail the personal and categorized relationships that characterize families as we know them, and in which the patterns of kinship tend to be extended outward from the group of genealogically connected individuals into the whole society. The kin are the type persons for all experience.

This general conception may be resolved into component or related conceptions. In the folk society family relationships are clearly distinguished from one another. Very special sorts of behavior may be expected by a mother's brother of his sister's son, and this behavior will be different from that expected by a father's brother of his brother's son. Among certain Australian tribes animals killed by a hunter must be divided so that nine or ten certain parts must be given to nine or ten corresponding relatives of the successful hunter—the right ribs to the father's brother, a piece of the flank to the mother's brother, and so on. The tendency to extend kinship outward takes many special forms. In many primitive societies kinship terms and kinship behavior (in reduced degree) are extended to persons not known to be genealogically related at all, but who are nevertheless regarded as kin. Among the central Australians, terms of relationship are extended "so as to embrace all persons who come into social contact with one another. . . . In this way the whole society forms a body of relatives." In the folk society groupings which do not arise out of genealogical connection are few, and those that do exist tend to take on the attributes of kinship. Ritual kinship is common in primitive and peasant societies in the forms of blood brotherhood, godparental relationships, and other ceremonial sponsorships. These multiply kinship connections; in these cases the particular individuals to be united depend upon choice. Furthermore, there is frequently a recognizedly fictitious or metaphorical use of kinship terms to designate more casual relationships, as between host and guest or between worshiper and deity.

The real primitive and peasant societies differ very greatly as to the forms assumed by kinship. Nevertheless, it is possible to recognize two main types. In one of these the connection between husband and wife is emphasized, while neither one of the lineages, matrilineal or patrilineal, is singled out as contrasted with the other. In such a folk society the individual parental family is the social unit, and connections with relatives outside this family are of secondary importance. Such family organization is common where the population is small, the means of livelihood are by precarious collection of wild food, and larger units cannot permanently remain together because the natural resources will not allow it. But where a somewhat larger population remains together, either in a village or in a migratory band, there often, although by no means always, is found an emphasis upon one line of consanguine connection rather than the other with subordination of the conjugal connection. There re-

sults a segmentation of the society into equivalent kinship units. These may take the form of extended domestic groups or joint families (as in China) or may include many households of persons related in part through recognized genealogical connection and in part through the sharing of the same name or other symbolic designation, in the latter case we speak of the groups as clans. Even in societies where the individual parental family is an independent economic unit, as in the case of the eastern Eskimo, husband and wife never become a new social and economic unit with the completeness that is characteristic of our own society. When a marriage in primitive society comes to an end, the kinsmen of the dead spouse assert upon his property a claim they have never given up. On the whole, we may think of the family among folk peoples as made up of persons consanguinely connected. Marriage is, in comparison with what we in our society directly experience, an incident in the life of the individual who is born, brought up, and dies with his blood kinsmen. In such a society romantic love can hardly be elevated to a major principle.

In so far as the consanguine lines are well defined (and in some cases both lines may be of importance to the individual) the folk society may be thought of as composed of families rather than of individuals. It is the familial groups that act and are acted upon. There is strong solidarity within the kinship group, and the individual is responsible to all his kin as they are responsible to him. "The clan is a natural mutual aid society. . . . A member belongs to the clan, he is not his own; if he is wrong, they will right him; if he does wrong, the responsibility is shared by them." Thus, in folk societies wherein the tendency to maintain consanguine connection has resulted in joint families or clans, it is usual to find that injuries done by an individual are regarded as injuries against his kinship group, and the group takes the steps to right the wrong. The step may be revenge regulated by custom or a property settlement. A considerable part of primitive law exists in the regulation of claims by one body of kin against another. The fact that the folk society is an organization of families rather than an aggregation of individuals is further expressed in many of those forms of marriage in which a certain kind of relative is the approved spouse. The customs by which in many primitive societies a man is expected to marry his deceased brother's widow or a woman to marry her deceased sister's husband express the view of marriage as an undertaking between kinship groups. One of the spouses having failed by death, the undertaking is to be carried on by some other representative of the family group. Indeed, in the arrangements for marriage—the selection of spouses by their relatives, in brideprice, dowry, and in many forms of familial negotiations leading to a marriage—the nature of marriage as a connubial form of social relations between kindreds finds expression.

It has been said in foregoing paragraphs that behavior in the folk society is traditional, spontaneous, and uncritical, that what one man does is much the same as what another man does, and that the patterns of conduct are clear and remain constant throughout the generations. It has also been suggested that the congruence of all parts of conventional behavior and social institutions with each other contributes to the sense of rightness which the member of the folk society feels to inhere in his traditional ways of action. In the well-known language of Sumner, the ways of life are folkways; furthermore, the folkways tend to be also mores—ways of doing or thinking to which attach notions of moral worth. The value of every traditional act or object or institution is, thus, something which the members of the society are not disposed to call into question; and should the value be called into question, the doing so is resented. This characteristic of the folk society may be briefly referred to by saying that it is a sacred society. In the folk society one may not, without calling into effect negative social sanctions, challenge as valueless what has come to be traditional in that society.

Presumably, the sacredness of social objects has its source, in part, at least, in the mere fact of habituation; probably the individual organism becomes early adjusted to certain habits, motor and mental, and to certain associations between one activity and another or between certain sense experiences and certain activities, and it is almost physiologically uncomfortable to change or even to entertain the idea of change. There arises "a feeling of impropriety of certain forms, of a particular social or religious value, or a superstitious fear of change." Probably the sacredness of social objects in the folk society is related also to the fact that in such well-organized cultures acts and objects suggest the traditions, beliefs, and conceptions which all share. There is reason to suppose that when what is traditionally done becomes less meaningful because people no longer know what the acts stand for, life becomes more secular. In the repetitious character of conventional action (aside from technical action) we have ritual; in its expressive character we have ceremony; in the folk society ritual tends also to be ceremonious, and ritual-ceremony tends to be sacred, not secular.

The sacredness of social objects is apparent in the ways in which, in the folk society, such an object is hedged around with restraints and protections that keep it away from the commonplace and the matter-of-fact. In the sacred there is alternatively, or in combination, holiness and dangerousness. When the Papago Indian returned from a successful war expedition, bringing the scalp of a slain Apache, the head-hairs of the enemy were treated as loaded with a tremendous "charge" of supernatural power; only old men, already successful warriors and purified through religious ritual, could touch the object and make it safe for incorporation into the home of the slayer. Made into the doll-like form of

an Apache Indian, it was, at last, after much ceremonial preparation, held for an instant by the members of the slayer's family, addressed in respect and awe by kinship terms, and placed in the house, there to give off protective power. The Indians of San Pedro de la Laguna, Guatemala, recognize an officer, serving for life, whose function it is to keep custody of ten or a dozen Latin breviaries printed in the eighteenth century and to read prayers from one or another of these books on certain occasions. No one but this custodian may handle the books, save his assistants on ceremonial occasions, with his permission. Should anyone else touch a book he would go mad or be stricken with blindness. Incense and candles are burnt before the chest containing the books, yet the books are not gods—they are objects of sacredness.

In the folk society this disposition to regard objects as sacred extends, characteristically, even into the subsistence activities and into the foodstuffs of the people. Often the foodstuffs are personified as well as sacred. "My granduncle used to say to me," explained a Navajo Indian, "‘if you are walking along a trail and see a kernel of corn, pick it up. It is like a child lost and starving.’ According to the legends corn is just the same as a human being, only it is holier. . . . When a man goes into a cornfield he feels that he is in a holy place, that he is walking among Holy People. . . . Agriculture is a holy occupation. Even before you plant you sing songs. You continue this during the whole time your crops are growing. You cannot help but feel that you are in a holy place when you go through your fields and they are doing well.'" In the folk society, ideally conceived, nothing is solely a means to an immediate practical end. All activities, even the means of production, are ends in themselves, activities expressive of the ultimate values of the society.

### 3

This characterization of the ideal folk society could be greatly extended. Various of the elements that make up the conception could be differently combined with one another, and this point or that could be developed or further emphasized and its relations shown to other aspects of the conception. For example, it might be pointed out that where there is little or no systematic and reflective thinking the customary solutions to problems of practical action only imperfectly take the form of really effective and understood control of the means appropriate to accomplish the desired end, and that, instead, they tend to express the states of mind of the individuals who want the end brought about and fear that it may not be. We say this briefly in declaring that the folk society is characterized by much magic, for we may understand "magic" to refer to action with regard to an end—to instrumental action—but only to such instrumental action as does not effectively bring about that end, or is not really



understood in so far as it does, and which is expressive of the way the doer thinks and feels rather than adapted to accomplishing the end. "Magic is based on specific experience of emotional states . . . in which the truth is revealed not by reason but by the play of emotions upon the human organism . . . magic is founded on the belief that hope cannot fail nor desire deceive." In the folk society effective technical action is much mixed with magical activity. What is done tends to take the form of a little drama; it is a picture of what is desired.

The nature of the folk society could, indeed, be restated in the form of a description of the folk mind. This description would be largely a repetition of what has been written in foregoing pages, except that now the emphasis would be upon the characteristic mental activity of members of the folk society, rather than upon customs and institutions. The man of the folk society tends to make mental associations which are personal and emotional, rather than abstractly categoric or defined in terms of cause and effect. ". . . Primitive man views every action not only as adapted to its main object, every thought related to its main end, as we should perceive them, but . . . he associates them with other ideas, often of a religious or at least a symbolic nature. Thus he gives to them a higher significance than they seem to us to deserve." A very similar statement of this kind of thinking has been expressed in connection with the thinking of medieval man; the description would apply as well to man in the folk society:

From the causal point of view, symbolism appears as a sort of short-cut of thought. Instead of looking for the relation between two things by following the hidden detours of their causal connections, thought makes a leap and discovers their relation, not in a connection of cause or effects, but in a connection of signification or finality. Such a connection will at once appear convincing, provided only that the two things have an essential quality in common which can be referred to a general value. . . . Symbolic assimilation founded on common properties presupposes the idea that these properties are essential to things. The vision of white and red roses blooming among thorns at once calls up a symbolic association in the medieval mind: for example, that of virgins and martyrs, shining with glory, in the midst of their persecutors. The assimilation is produced because the attributes are the same: the beauty, the tenderness, the purity, the colours of the roses are also those of the virgins, their red colour that of the blood of the martyrs. But this similarity will only have a mystic meaning if the middle-term connecting the two terms of the symbolic concept expresses an essentiality common to both; in other words, if redness and whiteness are something more than names for physical differences based on quantity, if they are conceived of as essences, as realities. The mind of the savage, of the child, and of the poet never sees them otherwise.

The tendency to treat nature personally has recognition in the literature as the "animistic" or "anthropomorphic" quality of primitive think-

ing, and the contrast between the means-ends pattern of thought more characteristic of modern urban man and the personal thought of primitive man has been specially investigated.

In the foregoing account no mention has been made of the absence of economic behavior characteristic of the market in the folk society. Within the ideal folk society members are bound by religious and kinship ties, and there is no place for the motive of commercial gain. There is no money and nothing is measured by any such common denominator of value. The distribution of goods and services tends to be an aspect of the conventional and personal relationships of status which make up the structure of the society: goods are exchanged as expressions of good will and, in large part, as incidents of ceremonial and ritual activities. "On the whole, then, the compulsion to work, to save, and to expend is given not so much by a rational appreciation of the [material] benefits to be received as by the desire for social recognition, through such behavior."

The conception sketched here takes on meaning if the folk society is seen in contrast to the modern city. The vast, complicated, and rapidly changing world in which the urbanite and even the urbanized country-dweller live today is enormously different from the small, inward-facing folk society, with its well-integrated and little-changing moral and religious conceptions. At one time all men lived in these little folk societies. For many thousands of years men must have lived so; urbanized life began only very recently, as the long history of man on earth is considered, and the extreme development of a secularized and swift-changing world society is only a few generations old.

The tribal groups that still remain around the edges of expanding civilization are the small remainders of this primary state of living. Considering them one by one, and in comparison with the literate or semiliterate societies, the industrialized and the semi-industrialized societies, we may discover how each has developed forms of social life in accordance with its own special circumstances. Among the polar Eskimos, where each small family had to shift for itself in the rigors of the arctic environment, although the ties of kinship were of great importance, no clans or other large unilateral kinship groups came into existence. The sedentary Haida of the Queen Charlotte Islands were divided into two exogamous kinship groups, each composed of clans, with intense pride of descent and healthy rivalry between them. Among the warring and nomadic Comanche initiative and resourcefulness of the individual were looked on more favorably than among the sedentary and closely interdependent Zuni. In West Africa great native states arose, with chiefs and courts and markets, yet the kinship organization remained strong; and in China we have an example of slow growth of a great society, with a literate élite, inclosing within it a multitude of village communities of the folk type. Where cities have arisen, the country people dependent on

those cities have developed economic and political relationships, as well as relationships of status, with the city people, and so have become that special kind of rural folk we call peasantry. And even in the newer parts of the world, as in the United States, many a village or small town has, perhaps, as many points of resemblance with the folk society as with urban life.

Thus the societies of the world do not range themselves in the same order with regard to the degree to which they realize all of the characteristics of the ideal folk society. On the other hand, there is so marked a tendency for some of these characteristics to occur together with others that the interrelations among them must be in no small part that of interdependent variables. Indeed, some of the interrelations are so obvious that we feel no sense of problem. The smallness of the folk society and the long association together of the same individuals certainly is related to the prevailingly personal character of relationships. The fewness of secondary and tertiary tools and the absence of machine manufacture are circumstances obviously unfavorable to a very complex division of labor. Many problems present themselves, however, as to the conditions in which certain of these characteristics do not occur in association, and as to the circumstances under which certain of them may be expected to change in the direction of their opposites, with or without influencing others to change also.

A study of the local differences in the festival of the patron village saint in certain communities of Yucatan indicates that some interrelationship exists in that case. In all four communities, differing as to their degrees of isolation from urban centers of modifying influence, the festival expresses a relationship between the village and its patron saint (or cross) which is annually renewed. In it a ritual and worship are combined with a considerable amount of play. The chief activities of the festival are a novena, a folk dance, and a rustic bullfight. In all four communities there is an organization of men and women who for that year undertake the leadership of the festival, handing over the responsibility to a corresponding group of successors at its culmination. So far the institution is the same in all the communities studied. The differences appear when the details of the ritual and play and of the festival organization are compared, and when the essential meanings of these acts and organizations are inquired into. Then it appears that from being an intensely sacred act, made by the village as a collectivity composed of familiarly defined component groups, with close relationship to the system of religious and moral understandings of the people, the festival becomes, in the more urbanized communities, chiefly an opportunity for recreation for some and of financial profit for others, with little reference to moral and religious conceptions.

In the most isolated and otherwise most folklike of the communities

studied the organization of the festival is closely integrated with the whole social structure of the community. The hierarchy of leaders of the community, whose duties are both civil and religious, carry on the festival: it is the chiefs, the men who decide disputes and lead in warfare, who also take principal places in the religious processions and in the conduct of the ceremonies. The community, including several neighboring settlements, is divided into five groups, membership in which descends in the male line. The responsibility for leading the prayers and preparing the festal foods rests in turn on four men chosen from each of the five groups. The festival is held at the head village, at the shrine housing the cross patron of the entire community. The festival consists chiefly of solemnly religious acts: masses, rosaries, procession of images, kneeling of worshipers. The ritual offerings are presented by a special officer, in all solemnity, to the patron cross; certain symbols of divinity are brought from the temple and exposed to the kneeling people as the offerings are made. The transfer of the responsibility to lead the festival is attended by ceremony in an atmosphere of sanctity: certain ritual paraphernalia are first placed on the altar and then, after recitation of prayers and performance of a religious dance, are handed over, in view of all, from the custodians of the sacred charge for that year to their successors.

In the villages that are less isolated the festival is similar in form, but it is less well integrated with the social organization of the community, is less sacred, and allows for more individual enterprise and responsibility. These changes continue in the other communities studied, as one gets nearer to the city of Merida. In certain seacoast villages the festival of the patron saint is a money-getting enterprise of a few secular-minded townspeople. The novena is in the hands of a few women who receive no help from the municipal authorities; the bullfight is a commercial entertainment, professional bullfighters being hired for the occasion and admission charged; the folk dance is little attended. The festival is enjoyed by young people who come to dance modern dances and to witness the bullfight, and it is an opportunity to the merchants to make a profit. What was an institution of folk culture has become a business enterprise in which individuals, as such, take part for secular ends.

The principal conclusion is that the less isolated and more heterogeneous communities of the peninsula of Yucatan are the more secular and individualistic and the more characterized by disorganization of culture. It further appeared probable that there was, in the changes taking place in Yucatan, a relation of interdependence among these changing characteristics, especially between the disorganization of culture and secularization. "People cease to believe because they cease to understand, and they cease to understand because they cease to do the things that express the understandings." New jobs and other changes in the division

of labor bring it about that people cannot participate in the old rituals; and, ceasing to participate, they cease to share the values for which the rituals stood. This is, admittedly, however, only a part of the explanation.

The conception of the folk society has stimulated one small group of field workers to consider the interdependence or independence of these characteristics of society. In Yucatan isolation, homogeneity, a personal and "symbolic" view of nature, importance of familial relationships, a high degree of organization of culture, and sacredness of sanctions and institutions were all found in regular association with each other. It was then reported that in certain Indian communities on or near Lake Atitlan in Guatemala this association of characteristics is not repeated. As it appeared that these Guatemalan communities were not in rapid change, but were persisting in their essential nature, the conclusion was reached that "a stable society can be small, unsophisticated, homogenous in beliefs and practices," have a local, well-organized culture, and still be one "with relationships impersonal, with formal institutions dictating the acts of individuals, and with family organization weak, with life secularized, and with individuals acting more from economic or other personal advantage than from any deep conviction or thought of the social good." It was further pointed out that in these Guatemalan societies, a "primitive world view," that is, a disposition to treat nature personally, to regard attributes as entities, and to make "symbolic" rather than causal connections, co-exists with a tendency for relations between man and man to be impersonal, commercial, and secular, as they tend to be in the urban society.

These observations lead, in turn, to reconsideration of the circumstances tending to bring about one kind of society or one aspect of society rather than another. The breakdown of familial institutions in recent times in Western society is often ascribed to the development of the city and of modern industry. If, as has been reported, familial institutions are also weak in these Guatemalan villages, there must be alternative causes for the breakdown of the family to the rise of industry and the growth of the city, for these Guatemalan Indians live on or near their farms, practice a domestic handicraft manufacture, and have little or nothing to do with cities. It has been suggested that in the case of the Guatemalan societies the development, partly before the Conquest and partly afterward, of a pecuniary economy with a peddler's commerce, based on great regional division of labor, together with a system of regulations imposed by an élite with the use of force, may be the circumstances that have brought about reduction in the importance of familial institutions and individual independence, especially in matters of livelihood.

The secular character of life in these highland villages of the Lake Atitlan region is not so well established as in the individuated character of life, but if life is indeed secular there, it is a secularity that has devel-

oped without the influence of high personal mobility, of the machine, and of science. In a well-known essay Max Weber showed how capitalistic commercialism could and did get along with piety in the case of the Puritans. So it may appear that under certain conditions a literate and, indeed, at least partly urbanized society may be both highly commercial and sacred—as witness, also, the Jews—while under certain other conditions an otherwise folklike people may become individualistic, commercial, and perhaps secular. It is, of course, the determination of the limiting conditions that is important.

## 31 African Tribalism



May Edel

THERE IS MUCH CONCERN FOR THE PROBLEMS OF SO-CALLED "TRIBAL" societies in contact with, not to say overrun by, "modern," more complex, state-organized societies. We are warned that age-old tribal identities and rivalries interfere with the development of that most desirable of all political institutions, the modern nation-state. This is usually coupled with sermons about the long educational process required to offset the anti-progressive forces of tribalism that hamper the rise to real, full civilization of various "peoples" in Asia and Africa.

Few of those who employ the terms "tribe" or "tribalism" bother to define what they are talking about. Implicit in most approaches, and explicit in most dictionaries, however, is a combination of elements which come to something like this: a tribe is an aggregate of people of more or less common origin, sharing a culture and language, organized into some kind of sociopolitical unit that differentiates itself from other comparable units and is so differentiated by others. Frequently, but not always, associated with a delimited territory, it is evolutionarily posterior to the primitive band and necessarily prior to the state. Unfortunately, an increasing number of anthropologists take exception to each point in the statement.

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May Mandelbaum Edel (1909-1964) was on the faculty of Rutgers University (Newark). Her major fieldwork was undertaken in east Africa. Her theoretical interests were broad and included a concern for comparative ethics. Among her books are *The Chiga of Western Uganda* (1957), and, with Abraham Edel, *Anthropology and Ethics* (1959).

*Among the key ideas in the revised approach to the problem of tribe we mention only three. First, it is not necessary to seek congruence between delimitable populations of culture bearers on the one hand and delimitable political units on the other. As a matter of fact, it is very difficult to make an empirical demonstration of such congruence. Second, there is equal difficulty in making an empirical demonstration of the existence of a tribal stage in political evolution; furthermore, the predication of such a stage is not a logical necessity. Third, and this is the point most germane to Professor Edel's article, those units which are commonly identified in the modern world as tribes often have surprisingly shallow historical depth. In a real sense they seem to be precipitates of modern economic and political conditions, particularly those associated with imperialism and colonialism.*

*It is to the last generalization that the Edel essay is an important contribution. Her analysis of Chiga history leaves little doubt that the Chiga were unrecognizable as a discrete tribal group until comparatively recent times, certainly not until the last century. Professor Edel's paper is not merely an academic anthropological excursion into semantics. If the generalizations toward which she was tending are valid, many of the contemporary approaches to problems of new nation formation are erroneous. As a consequence many presently suggested programs or courses of action will ultimately prove to be inappropriate and useless or, what is worse, they will finally be revealed as reactionary and malicious.*

## I

Gwendolyn Carter once commented that "there is a sense for Africa as a whole which is more real to the educated Africans of the continent than is the notion of Europe to educated Europeans, or of one America to the inhabitants of North and South America." Pan-Africanism, the various All-African Conferences, common interest in the movements for freedom of all the African peoples, the African voting bloc in the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity—these are all expressions of a sense of African identity based on a common experience under colonialism and a common goal of freedom and dignity in the modern world. Among African intellectuals there is a search for common African values and world-views, an attempt to discover, or to forge, a bond of common culture, exemplified in the concepts of Negritude, and expressed in a growing body of sophisticated contemporary literature.

Yet Africa today, even just Africa "south of the Sahara," is far from a single unified cultural and ethnic whole. There are hundreds of languages; differences, both old and new, in ways of getting a living; and matrilineal, patrilineal, and even dual forms of family organization. De-



spite the attempt to find a common philosophical base for "African religion," there are vast differences in traditional religions in both practice and belief. There are friendly and unfriendly ancestors, great pantheons and areas with little interest in the gods, and varying incidence of witchcraft beliefs, possession cults, and initiation rites. There is a further divisive effect of intrusive religions: Islam, Protestant or Catholic churches, and blends of the new and the old. There are differences, too, in the old forms of tribal organization. Indigenous African political units ranged from small-scale chieftainships, rooted in kin and clan, to great states, often established by conquest and ruled by the superposition of alien lineages. There were also "tribes without rulers," areas of fragmented, subdividing lineages, with no central authority or common allegiance at all, even within the boundaries of shared language and culture.

There are those who wonder to what extent national or pan-African ideas and ideals, realistic or romantic common causes can transcend the enormous diversities of cultural and "tribal" or ethnic affiliations. The boundaries of the several emerging nations were drawn not according to African political, cultural, and linguistic affinities, but by the accidents of European history. It is asked whether "tribal" loyalties—the ties that bind the individual to his rural home, that spell themselves out as obligations to his kinsmen, that impel him to have respect for traditional authority figures, or that structure developing lines of authority in patterns set by older forms of social organization—are likely to be more active factors in the current social situation than the new nationalisms. Will older antagonisms to other peoples make it difficult to forge new bonds of common allegiance along national lines? To what degree are the boundaries of the moral community—the group within which common moral fellowship is acknowledged—changing, becoming wider and more inclusive? Certainly there are many cleavages, points of considerable tension on the modern scene, which seem to fall along old lines of tribal divisions. To what extent are these a tribal legacy deeply rooted in the divergent loyalties and institutions of the past, and destined to be a genuine source of long-range difficulty in Africa?

## II

The general point of this paper is that however much tribal affiliation and identification may enter, the issues and conflicts of today are rooted in problems and social interactions of today, and are not just atavisms rooted in some preexistent past and continuing on a momentum of traditionalism. This is not to say that history does not count; it is a requisite key to understanding any transformations in the present, which can only be transformations *of* the past. But the manifold ways in which

varying kinds of tribal identifications will be extended or deepened, the extent to which old cultures and old loyalties will remain stumbling blocks to change, or be transformed, widened, and reinterpreted, seem to me to be functions not of the past as such, but of the genuine issues and problems of the present, to which new answers must be found. At least as a heuristic principle, it seems to be fruitful to keep a careful research orientation on these issues and problems of the present, and on the direction of their development, if we are to understand the role that the past continues to play.

Both Gluckman and Epstein, who have worked in this kind of theoretical framework, have made this point. Speaking of the role of "tribal" organizations and affiliations in the urban area of the Copperbelt, in Northern Rhodesia, Epstein writes, "Intertribal relations on the Copperbelt . . . and the cleavages within political organizations along tribal lines, cannot be explained simply as vestiges from a tribal past which have survived into the present. On the contrary, they reflect processes at work within the urban social system." He points out that while "tribalism refers to a significant category of interaction in everyday social relationships among Africans," the lines of tribal alignment tend to be transformed by the historical accidents of the present. For example, he tells us that peoples of many different tribes from Nyasaland form a community of common interest in the mining area and are regarded as though they were a tribal unit. Similarly Gluckman points out that even in the rural areas, where tribal identifications are still operating in their original regional and community settings, "we are still not dealing merely with survivals," but rather that "membership of a tribe involves participation in a working political system, and sharing domestic life with kinfolk; and that this continued participation is based on present economic and social needs, and not merely on conservatism."

### III

I should like to explore the situation in Uganda as one illustration of this complex process of interaction between modern interests and older loyalties. Uganda is not "typical" in any simple sense, but it is probably no less so than any other specific area of Africa. It embraces a characteristic heterogeneity of ethnic make-up. Its peoples speak various Bantu, Sudanic, and Nilotic languages. There are herdsmen in the north and west, fisherfolk on the great lakes, and farmers dependent on quite distinct food staples—millet in some areas, plantain in others. The present boundaries of Uganda include the great kingdoms of Buganda, Bunyoro, and Ankole, quite a number of smaller states, and a large number of non-centralized peoples who had no chiefs at all. These were disparate peoples, with no possible sense of common allegiance or obligation. In-

deed, between many of these different peoples—tribes, if you like—there was an active condition of warfare at the time of British intervention, in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Uganda was governed by the British as a protectorate. There were few permanent European residents, no great areas of European plantations, coppermines, or industrial centers, although there were some small-scale European and Indian-owned cotton mills, and later a growing focus of factory production around the electric-power center in Jinja. Most important, from the point of view of the difficulties in the current situation, is the fact that throughout the history of the protectorate, Buganda, a separate province about twice the size of the ancient kingdom of Uganda, enjoyed a special and privileged status. By the terms of the Uganda Agreement, signed in 1900, and supplemented by further legislation over the years, Buganda received a considerable measure of self-government. The Kabaka was recognized as hereditary monarch. Wide areas of appointment to office, administration of welfare departments, tax-collection and some disbursement, even lawmaking, were in the hands of the Lukiko or council, a body of chiefs and notables appointed by the Kabaka, or elected by a complicated system of indirect voting, culminating in electoral colleges in the various districts. Chiefs and other dignitaries were assigned large areas of agricultural land as their private estates, so that now about half—and the more valuable half—of the land in Buganda province is privately owned, in blocs which range from a few acres to many square miles. A good deal of this is planted in cotton and coffee, worked by share-cropping tenants or hired labor, and some of the holdings in and near Kampala are subdivided into relatively high-rental residential or business plots.

The rest of the protectorate was governed by quite different regulations. Its chiefs were British appointees, and in some areas, where there was no background of centralized authority on even a small scale, the chiefs were Ganda,<sup>1</sup> brought in to teach the “backward” areas how to govern themselves. Even where, as in Bunyoro, for example, or Ankole, hereditary kings were recognized by specific agreements, they did not have the self-governing powers assigned to the Baganda. And nowhere else were there parallel land allotments, so that there are no comparable large estates, nor access to individual wealth, for the peoples of the rest of Uganda.

The movement toward independence in Uganda involved a drama which is easily referred to the rubric of “tribalism.” The issue was that of Ganda separatism. Establishing a Protectorate Legislative Council with increasing native representation and responsible participation in government was conceived by the Colonial Office as an important step

<sup>1</sup> Ganda here refers, as is customary current usage, to the people of Buganda, who speak Luganda, and call themselves Baganda.

toward the goal of independence and self-government. When a common election for delegates to this body was held, Buganda refused to participate in the election, although special provision was made to guarantee it substantial representation. Actually, there were several issues. One was the threat of being swamped in a protectorate-wide body; another was the disapproval of a direct-election system, which would have given the vote even to "foreigners" resident in Buganda (that is, members of other tribes of the protectorate and Ruanda, who in a few districts actually constitute a majority of the population); and a third was popular opposition to a body which was clearly being set up on a "multiracial" basis, with representation for Europeans and Indians.

The election boycott was successful. Only some thirty-five thousand out of a Buganda population of over a million registered for it. When arrangements for the election went ahead in spite of the Buganda protest and boycott, the Lukiko—the Buganda assembly—declared itself out of the protectorate. It passed a resolution rescinding its 1900 agreement with Britain and declaring its full independence. Despite Britain's refusal to recognize this new status, it proceeded, on January 11, 1961, to implement its resolution by assigning ministerial portfolios to cover the new functions the independent government would have to assume.

When the British persisted, and the candidates elected by the three per cent who voted were seated in the legislature, the Ganda leaders changed tactics and founded their own political party, Kabaka Yekka ("the Kabaka only"), which captured the seats at the next election, and secured special home-rule privileges for Buganda and the election of the Kabaka as the first president of Uganda. Kabaka Yekka has been maintained as a strictly Baganda party, despite suggestions that it expand to include traditionalist and royalist elements in the other kingdoms of Uganda.

Certainly, this is Ganda "tribalism" in the sense that it is Ganda separatism and a reflection of Ganda attitudes of difference and superiority over the other peoples of the protectorate. These attitudes are easy to discern. Land is seldom sold to members of other tribal groups, although they are welcomed as tenants, especially as seasonal commercial-production tenants. Many "foreigners" play a considerable role as stewards and even political right-hand men to their landlords, but virtually none have yet been appointed as chiefs. The Ganda are, on the average, wealthier. They are Christian, and more of them are literate and even highly educated. They disdain to work with their hands, and whenever possible hire paid laborers, who flock in from all sides to work on Ganda-owned plantations and in construction trades, while landless Ganda aim at civil-service jobs and commute from the suburbs on bicycles.

The quality of Ganda superiority feelings is neatly epitomized in a

fragment of a high-school students' debate, reported by Audrey Richards:

14-year-old girl: "If we are all equal we ought to give our porters food on plates with us, and not on banana leaves at the back door."

Answer, from another student: "But we are not equal. The Europeans and Ganda are clean and the others are dirty."

It would seem to me quite obvious that the character and content of these attitudes are at least as much a product of the privileged economic and political position of the Ganda today as a heritage of previous tribal alignments. For one thing, Ganda superiority was not so firmly entrenched before the Uganda agreement with Britain. It is true that the kingdom was an expanding conquest state, exacting tribute from increasing numbers of its neighbors. It had an extremely powerful and rather efficient system of centralized control, with an elaborate appointive bureaucracy under a hereditary dynastic ruler. But it was not the only powerful state in the region. The Kingdom of Bunyoro especially was in a comparable position of successful conquest and ascendancy. One of the factors impelling the Ganda to make peace with the British and place themselves under their protection was the desire to gain British arms and support against their dangerous rival in the west. There is still a considerable area in Buganda which is *Bunyoro irridenta*, Lunyoro-speaking, but ruled by Ganda chiefs. The districts in question were ceded to Buganda not by treaty with the Nyoro, but by agreement with the British, in recognition of Ganda co-operation against the intransigent Nyoro, whose king died in exile, never reconciled to British rule. And the problem of these "lost counties" is still a live issue.<sup>2</sup>

To some extent these issues still rankle. But it seems that "tribal" (or perhaps in this instance we would be better advised to say "national" or "imperial") antagonisms must sometimes be set aside for larger issues, such as the safeguarding of the principle of monarchy. In any case, it is precisely with their old rivals—the great kingdoms of Bunyoro, Toro, and Ankole—that the Ganda ruling class made some common cause. The several hereditary monarchs met together a number of times, and urged that no change be made in the formal government of the protectorate before the status of Buganda, and the position of its monarch, were fully clarified and protected. The value of hereditary monarchy both as symbol and for bargaining power in the contemporary situation is so great that in Busoga the chiefs, once heads of about fifteen separate small states and now united by the British under an appointed Paramount, have asked that the latter be elevated in status and be named hereditary monarch.

<sup>2</sup> In 1964 the Baganda political party, Kabaka Yekka, withdrew from its coalition with the government when Prime Minister Obote approved the holding of a referendum on their status.

And when Uganda achieved its independence in 1962, the constitution provided for hereditary status for the various kings and federal status for their several districts, though with greater formal independent powers granted to Buganda than to the others.

"Tribalism" certainly seems an inadequate and misleading term for this whole situation. We must remember that the lines of separation between these various kingdoms were in a state of flux long before the British arrived on the scene. There were realignments by war and conquest, and by treaty among the rulers, which meant that subject populations were transferred to different masters. In addition, subject peoples themselves might move, or adopt a new ruler. As Audrey Richards puts it:

Lineage groups have split off from parent stocks and have become attached by fictions of common descent to similar lineages in another tribe. In some cases they have acquired position as ruling dynasties over indigenous people. In others the migrants have been absorbed into the political systems of neighboring tribes by the mere act of recognizing the latter's chiefs and giving them tribute. They have done so either as refugees from one tyrannical chief trying to win protection from another, or as humble allies of a more powerful political group. Cases of families and individuals being incorporated into stranger tribes are also known.

What is more, in Buganda the political organization was not set up along clan and kin lines, with permanent relationships to hereditary chiefs and subchiefs. Instead there was considerable vertical as well as horizontal mobility. Only the position of the Kabaka was hereditary, and even that was not clearcut, because there was no simple designation of the specific heir. The ancient kingdom was almost an "open society." Chiefs were appointed and demoted by the Kabaka; preferment was by personal favor, not lineage. And as for the ordinary Muganda, too poor to play this game of power politics, even he was in a position to exercise some role in it. A new chief might be appointed over him at any time, to whom he would owe customary dues and assistance in war. But he was free to move on his own initiative, to find a master whom he preferred if he did not like his immediate overlord. Land-use rights came from this kind of voluntary feudal subjection, not from membership in a clan with vested rights to particular land areas, although there were indications of earlier conditions of such tenure, as in the designated non-alienable clan burial grounds.

Certainly this is a far cry from the usual model of traditional chieftainship and hereditary loyalties. The consequence of the Uganda agreement, and particularly of its land tenure provisions, was to shift the balance toward what Low, in his analysis of twentieth-century Buganda political history, has so aptly called "neo-traditionalism." There has been increasing power for the chiefs, with rather less for the Kabaka, and for the ordinary peasant. Many of the best-educated and most Westernized

elite are the sons of wealthy landowning chiefs, with an inclination to enter the power-hierarchy rather than to fight it.

Furthermore, and again to counter the model of homogeneity and comfortable unity under "tribal" conditions, there is reason to think that the Ganda are far from a united people today. It is true that there was strong general support for the Kabaka a few years ago, when he was exiled in a political dispute with Britain. But this was an indignity which could obviously rally the support of anti-British nationalists, such as the Uganda National Congress, as well as of the most ardent traditionalists. It is also true that the 1960 election boycott was successful, but there have been accusations that this was the effect of threats and intimidation, not unanimity of sentiment. And there were voices, in Buganda itself, which accused the Lukiko of refusing to go along with constitutional changes because its members were afraid of being voted out of office in genuinely democratic elections. These accusations may be partial and biased, but they are at least straws in the wind.

There are a few clearer indications of some popular resentment against the entrenched power of the landlords and chiefs—grumbings, for example, which Richards reports, that landlords line their pockets at the expense of Ganda peasants, by preferring to rent their lands to the Alur and other "foreign" tenants. And there has been the long history of resentment over the violation of clan burial-ground rights, expressed through the "Bataka Union" of lineage heads. When the chiefs' estates were assigned, many of them received, as part of their private lands, grounds which traditionally belonged to the different clans and lineages in perpetuity, as burial centers for all the scattered members of the clan. The "Bataka" lost their legal case for the return of these lands as long ago as 1926, but they have remained a pressure group, and apparently have had considerable popular support as a channel for the expression of various grievances. Some of these boiled over in riots in 1945 and 1949. In 1949, the Bataka submitted a petition to the Kabaka, calling among other things for greater democracy in government, including direct election of Lukiko representatives. I have no data on their political strength today. But it is surely important to note that while there are some fifty thousand Ganda landowners by now, this is just a tiny fraction of the entire Ganda population, and other bases of political differences are clearly present.

There is one other "new" cultural distinction which plays an important role in Uganda politics: religious affiliation, particularly as between Catholic and Protestant groups. This goes far enough back in Buganda history so that perhaps it ought to fall into the category of the "neo-traditional." There were serious religious conflicts between the adherents of different Christian missions, as well as with followers of Islam, in the early pre-pacification days. Once order was established, the issue was resolved by apportionment of different areas and political offices to Protestants and

Catholics respectively, and Low's study indicates that for the whole first half of this century there was very little change in the distribution. There are virtually no pagan chiefs, and very few large-scale landholders, who are not officially Christian. The only exception is in the area of Kkooki, where an entire small kingdom was incorporated into Buganda by its own voluntary submission, just in time to profit by the favorable terms of the Uganda agreement.

#### IV

What of the other peoples of the protectorate, with their differing languages and cultures and varying adherence to older ways of life? What does "tribalism" mean to them, and to what degree have their horizons and loyalties been changing? Because of the differences in their older life ways, and in their reactions to modern currents of change, it would be very difficult to make any valid statements that would fit all of them. I should, as a matter of fact, even be hard pressed to find a definition for the tribe as such which would fit all the peoples of Uganda. However, for some at least we can say that the experiences of the recent past have acted as a catalyst for the emergence of new and wider ethnic identifications. For the Alur, for example, we can find the same kind of situational interpretation of identification and allegiance, and the same process of "super-tribalization," of recognition of "tribal" belongingness far beyond the limits of any earlier community. Actually, the Alur represent at least five different stocks, varying in language and culture. They were all subject to Alur chiefs, but the latter governed as individuals, not as members of an organized governing unit. Today, when any of these many people come to Buganda to work, they are all classified as Alur, both by the Ganda and themselves. They are fitted into a Ganda stereotype for the Alur, as rather violent people, with a penchant for fighting and strong drink, but excellent workers. And they tend to live apart in little enclaves, which may be made up of actual kinsmen, or simply of people from the same clan, chieftainship, or region. The phenomenon of clustering together for security, which this represents, is a common one in the urbanization process. It has been described not only for Africa, but for other parts of the world as well, and characterizes the immigrant to America as well as it does the "tribal" migrant to a large city. In Uganda, welfare and social clubs have developed along such "super-tribal" lines, embracing, for example, all people from Ruanda and Urundi, or many different speakers of Luo dialects.

The Ganda keep all these people at a social distance, and deny them landownership or political preferment. This is itself a new rather than an old phenomenon, for the Ganda in the past incorporated aliens. Indeed, some of the leading Ganda families were originally of alien lineage. To-



day, "foreigners" are kept out of the power elite as much as possible. But as far as the immigrants themselves are concerned, more and more of them are staying longer and longer, just as is the case in other centers of cash income in Africa. And it is clear that whatever their past or present antagonisms to the Ganda may be, some at least among them are quite ready to be assimilated, if the Ganda would allow it. As the protocol of an interview with a Ruanda immigrant puts it, "Yes, I want to become a Ganda. I join in everything they do. When I have enough money I mean to be baptised like the Ganda."

The model of tribalism must also be modified by the segmentary-lineage type of structure which was to be found among quite a few of the peoples of Uganda. For such people as the Chiga, whatever sense of ethnic unity they possess can only be an emergent one, a response to experiences of the recent past. For the Chiga as I knew them in the nineteen-thirties had no "tribal" unity whatsoever. They were simply those people who lived in the hill country of the southwest. They spoke a dialect of Lunyankole sometimes with a considerable admixture of Lunyaruanda. There was no common Chiga jural or moral community. Different Chiga clans, and even sub-clans, were constantly fighting one another; there were cattle raids, feud killings, even open battles. And there was no way of avoiding such bloodshed by ritual or blood-money payments, except between closely related lineages. The only ties uniting people of different lineages were bonds of affinal kinship and pact-brotherhood, and these were individual bonds only, not political networks.

The only sense of common Chiga identity came from a common rejection of alien overlordship. They were the people whom the Hima and the Tutsi had not conquered, or who had escaped from their suzerainty. They recognized no chiefs, paid no tribute, and told with proud boasts of individuals who had accepted patronage gifts of cattle, only to run off with them instead of becoming vassals. But the battles they had fought with invading Ruanda or Ankole armies were fought by separate clans, not by the Chiga as a people. The different clans had no common ultimate identity, no claim to common origin; some spoke of coming from the north, others from Ruanda, and all knew of individuals and lineages who had moved away, migrated, for instance, northward to the grasslands below the escarpment, and so had ceased to be "Bachiga."

Independence and individualism have remained important parts of the Chiga world-view and value system. When resettlement projects were undertaken in recent years, to relieve serious population pressure on their densely settled lands, the Chiga resisted attempts to move them into Ankole. This was not because of traditional ties to their homeland, for such moves had often taken place in the past, but because those who were to move feared they would lose their independence and become subject to the hereditary ruler of Ankole.

The Chiga image of government as distasteful has not been lessened by their experience with British overrule. They are among those peoples of the protectorate whose introduction to the techniques of "self" government was through Ganda chiefs. Baxter tells us that one of the lessons they learned was that chiefs should be domineering and arbitrary. Being a pragmatic people, the Chiga knuckled under to superior power, but they are no doubt ready to value their independence should they win it once more.

Perhaps there is a danger here for the future. On the other hand, the Chiga have been moving forward to participation in the money economy, to Christianity and education. They have been selling their goats and their labor in Buganda, and improving their agricultural methods by careful terracing and reforestation. Some of them have lately been the proud recipients of freehold titles to their agricultural plots. Perhaps their qualities of rugged individualism, uncomplicated by strong tribal bonds, will fit them well for democracy. I have no actual current data on which to predict whether individualism, nationalism, or a new tribalism will emerge in this area. It appears that in earlier district elections, the Chiga did vote in large numbers, indicating an interest in wider affairs; but they are reported to have voted solidly by religious blocs, "lining up" literally behind the Protestant and Catholic candidates respectively. Major Uganda national parties today represent a fusion of parties from the northeast and the southwest, again suggestive of wider allegiances. Many delicate problems may still be in the balance, of course. Only recently, people somewhat similar to the Chiga in their cultural and political status (the Konjo and the Amba of the northern part of the Western Province) have been demanding separate recognition. They claim to be discriminated against by the Toro, and would like to form a distinct administrative unit from them.<sup>3</sup> But this is all within the framework of the Uganda national state, not a proposed secession.

All this suggests that the Chiga are beginning to see themselves as part of Uganda. It does not tell us whether the Chiga have in fact developed any stronger identification of themselves as a tribal unit than they once had. Certainly their moral community has broadened in at least some senses, for the old warfare and fighting have gone, under the enforced *Pax Britannica*. With this change, there had begun the acceptance of other people's rights to their lives and to their cattle, as long ago as in the nineteen-thirties. I do not know how much further this has gone today.

In any case, I think we can say not only for the Chiga, but for most of Uganda, that whatever strength "tribal" allegiances and inter-tribal antagonisms may have can hardly be a heritage from the "tribal" past, since for the masses of the people neither loyalties nor differences were deeply

<sup>3</sup> There have been outbreaks of violence in February 1963 and June 1964.

rooted in a "tribal" tradition. Perhaps it is different in regions in which there was a more integral relation of the chief to his people, based on common hereditary territorial and ritual commitments. But I think the prevalence of the latter kind of unity has probably been somewhat exaggerated in our common image of Africa. In Uganda, as we have seen, the lines of what *is* one's tribe, of what security it provides and what obligations it implies, and the character of its relations with other tribes, have always been subject to fluctuation and reinterpretation. It seems to me that patterns of cohesion, division, and identification will continue to be responsive to the realities of legal, economic, and political experiences and pressures. The emergence of a stronger consciousness of ethnic unity in any "tribal" region does not have to be incompatible with the parallel growth of allegiance to a wider unity, providing there is some context in which each is meaningful, and that the interests involved are not sharply in conflict.

## V

A parallel lesson could be drawn from the implications of another meaning which is sometimes given to "tribalism." I have been considering tribalism in the sense of ethnic loyalty and identification. It is also sometimes taken to refer to commitment to traditional patterns of culture. There are, it is true, considerable differences in the extent to which different African peoples have chosen the path of culture change. Some, especially the pastoral peoples of East Africa—including the Karamajong and others of northern Uganda—have fought to maintain their traditional way of life. Most others have welcomed at least some change, have accepted the value of lamps and bicycles, and even of universities, hospitals, and scientific research. We all know the story of the ways in which changes in family form, land utilization, the position of women, and so on follow in succession once the die is cast. It is too late now for most of Africa to vote for "tribal" ways of life. It is true that we are witnessing today a strong rebirth of some aspects of indigenous culture. Pouring libations to the ancestors and wearing cloths instead of European clothes, as in Ghana today, are symptoms of this movement. But these are sophisticated symbols, not simple reversions to "tribalism." Nor are they marks of tribal separatism. Their essence is the defiance not of modern ways as such but of the image of the colonial power, and all of its culture, as superior. More meaningful are the new cultural forms, the family corporations, women's welfare "meetings," even such things as the new concrete sculpture, which are adaptations of the old to meet the problems and demands of today.

I do not believe that differences in culture as such are likely to be barriers to communication and unity of action, or to mutual tolerance and

respect in Africa. The African has no tradition for crusading missionary zeal in imposing his own standards of morality and esthetics on other people. Hair styles, riddles and songs, even initiation rites like the filing of teeth, have passed readily from one people to another in the past, sometimes even as fads and fashions to be experimented with. If such differences ever become the rallying cries for conflict, it will surely be only because they will be symbols for existing conflict on another level. Of course, institutional differences, as in marriage and inheritance laws, may sometimes pose problems in relations between intermarrying groups; but these are no more (and no less) difficult of resolution than the comparable problems posed by the rapidly changing patterns of social organization within a given "tribe."

In short, I think that we can say, for tribal cultures as for tribal loyalties, that features of the past are likely to be dynamic factors in the present only as they are relevant to real issues in the present and reflect common or conflicting interests and values. It sometimes seems to me that the issues of "tribalism" which pose the greatest problems for Africans today are those that arise not from situations intrinsic to Africa but from the "tribal" conflicts of our own Western world.

## 32 American Communities



Conrad M. Arensberg

ONE DAY IN 1947, WHEN THE EDITOR OF THIS BOOK WAS JUST BEGINNING TO settle into a community in east-central China, he was summoned to appear at once at the office of the county magistrate. The magistrate was polite but cold: an anthropological study of his country was an affront; anthropologists, said the magistrate, studied only savages and barbarians.

For several decades now, anthropologists have made field studies in almost every complex society that would permit such work to be undertaken. For the most part these researches have been community studies—a blending of ethnographic and older sociological interests with methods derived from both. The United States has been the subject of a good many studies and some of the results of this work are given in this selection.

The community-study method has been fairly widely used in studies of American culture. In that method it has become traditional to use

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Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University, the author (b. 1910) is known as a sociologist as well as an anthropologist. A participant in the elaborate study of Newburyport, Massachusetts (*Yankee City*), he also made a detailed study of Irish rural society. Arensberg was associated with the economist Karl Polanyi in a research project of economic institutions (see II:14) and is deeply concerned with problems of applied anthropology. Among his works are *The Irish Countryman* (1936); *Family and Community in Ireland* (with Solon T. Kimball) (1940; 2d ed., 1968); and *Trade and Market in the Early Empires* (with Polanyi and Pearson) (1957). Among his most recent works are *Introducing Social Change* (with Arthur H. Niehoff) (1964); and *Culture and Community* (with Solon T. Kimball) (1965).

local communities as local samples or microcosms of culture. A good deal of theoretical statement of the justification of the tradition is now accumulating. Nevertheless, no independent treatment of specifically American communities looking toward classifying them in correspondences with a typology of American cultures or subcultures has yet been attempted. It is useful, then, if communities do reflect their cultures, to ask what sorts of communities are distinguishable in the United States and how these sorts reflect one by one American culture or cultures.

### *Cultures and Communities*

In undertaking to answer such questions, some preliminary decisions must be made. We must take it for granted that communities properly sampled do reflect their cultures. The full proof is not cogent here; I have taken pains to spell out elsewhere how they do so. Communities seem to be basic units of organization and transmission within a culture. They provide for human beings and their cultural adaptation to nature the basic minimum personnel and the basic minimum of social relations through which survival is assured and the content of culture can be passed on to the next generation. Already pan-animal as ecological units, communities are pan-human as transmission units for human culture. It is their function in keeping alive the basic inventory of traits and institutions of the minimal personnel of each kind for which culture provides a role and upon which high-culture specialization and acceptance can be built that makes human communities into cell-like repeated units of organization within human societies and cultures.

We can rely, then, on this hypothesis for ordering the experience of American communities we will cite. Without defending it further, we must notice at once that it implies that each culture has its characteristic community which serves as such unit and that each isolable type of community, as such a unit of cultural organization and transmission, stands for an isolable culture. We can hypothesize a one-to-one correspondence of some kind between culture and community.

Naturally the correspondence will hold for the two only as we take them as cultural data. We must treat them with the same operations of observation and generalization, working on both of them within cultural or social anthropology rather than at random. Cultural data are patterns and wholes and processes among patterns, not matters of size, population, location, economics, etc. Such patterns reach us from comparative ethnographic analysis. They are constructs modeling and explaining the successions and variations in human adaptation and invention, and their first field is the field of *forms*.

That means that our treatment of culture and community need not resemble the results of economic or sociological analysis. Our treatment

of communities in America or anywhere, from hamlets and market centers to metropolises, need not coincide with that of modern urban study or with human or economic geography. We must share facts with other disciplines. But we must put them together and add to them new ones of our own quite differently. Anthropology's point of reference is the comparative human record of cultures and communities everywhere. Laws and processes among other phenomena, however sharply they too are reflected in the story of cultures and communities, are to us, at most, ancillary.

Rather our view of communities will rest upon the pioneer cultural analysis in Mumford's *The Culture of Cities* (1937). There the correspondence of community and culture got its first great statement. Mumford demonstrated that for each cultural advance in European life a new form of the city emerged. The medieval borough around market and cathedral, urban counterpart of the manorial village, expressed the high Middle Ages; the baroque capital of parade avenues, palaces, and *places d'armes* mirrored the absolutist national states; the sooty tangle of factory and slum and the residential segregations of the withdrawn squires on the hill in mill towns and mill cities matched the industrial and railroad age. Each community form (here "city") was unique, just as the age, which the anthropologist calls "culture," was unique. Accidental functional, social, economic, and geographical differences, whereby one city was a port and another a fortress, or one climbed a mountainside and another sprawled over rivers, plains, and canals, fell away as Mumford showed us the grand similarity of city form.

We can thus expect American culture, in its many subcultures of region and age, to show similar correspondence in forms. There will be an American community, at least in pattern discernible above accidents of function, size, location, etc., for every American culture. Indeed, conversely, for as many types of communities as we can distinguish from the record there will be *so* many cultures upon the American scene.

### *Cultural Analysis*

The trick, as we said, is to treat communities and their cultures with the same analytic devices. Such devices must be empirically descriptive of the real world and use the common data we share with other sciences. But they must also be comparative in the fullest ethnographic sense. They must yield us defensible and recognizable patterns at once generalizing and specific to time and place.

At the present stage of the science of culture such devices do exist. They are ready for use in our abstracting from the many accounts of real American communities, both large and small, the significant patterns of form which we seek. We do not yet, however, have sufficient theory of

culture upon which to build comparative patterns for whole cultures. I shall treat only the communities here, and I shall have to leave to other authors any patterns for the wholes of the corresponding American cultures. Nevertheless, it may be that what I think we can discern of patterns in American communities will give us interesting distinguishing features which may help us with recognition and prediction of the wholes.

Hundreds of accounts of American communities already exist. They appear in every stage of completeness of description. They come to us from the prolific pages of American censuses, American rural sociology, agricultural and land economics, urban sociology, social-problems literature, architecture and city or community planning, human and urban geography, regional history, local novels, muckraking investigations, as well as from formal "community studies." Our job is less to cite such abundance of data than to order it into sense. We shall content ourselves with drawing upon fairly common knowledge of American life and its local manifestations. Nothing can be more obvious than most of the facts we shall have to use; anthropology can hope to find few esoterica in our own back yards. Nevertheless, if our comparisons order even obvious facts in genuinely universal and cross-cultural ways, then the patterns we discover in American communities will not only be new but they will be important to the perspective of science and to the record of anthropology.

What are the comparative analytic devices of cultural analysis we can put to work on all human communities in general and on American ones in particular? Clearly they must be such as describe all cases in common, yet still combine for useful comparisons. They must be such as go into the building of structural models. Nowadays it is clear that a model rather than a definition serves to represent the complex variables of a complex situation, thing, or process. A model serves better to put together empirical descriptions economically and surely and to handle summarily things of many dimensions, little-known organization, diverse functions and processes, intricate connections with other things. Definitions are too shallow and too full of verbal traps; summaries of propositions are too slow, piecemeal, and cumbersome. And certainly communities are such complex things.

We shall seek here for a family of models comparing all communities to our known American ones. Our models will not be simple ones. Spare as possible, with one term for each attribute and one relation in the model for each relation in the thing, they must still cover the many attributes which communities can be described for. They must cover size, spread, density, land use, traffic flow, population replacement, and so on. They must treat the many functions for individual lives or for society that communities may have: subsistence, defense, sociability, mate



choice, trade, social or political control. They must try to cast these attributes and functions into the connections they have in real life. They must go on to trials of forecasting form, structure, and process, since attributes and functions connect in definite ways that have definite products and lawful properties of change. In the last analysis, a model is predictive, as these must be. It is testable in each new prediction. If a new fact can be predicted to fit in just so, with a result upon the model which foretells the outcome in the thing, then the model is correct and the theory upon which it is built is true.

Thus the models we shall need for American communities must rest on the common terms of description which serve for all others. The terms that we must vary as each successive model of the family represents the changed realities of a common experience of all communities in a new particular one must be terms of universal application. The following are the variable comparative terms which apply to all human and animal communities, out of which our models can be built:

1. Individuals (persons or animals)
2. Spaces (territory, position, movement)
3. Times (schedules, calendars, time-series)
4. Functions (for individual and group life)
5. Structure and Process

1. *Individuals* Our first operation of description and model building for all communities specifies individuals (persons, animals). It answers: Who? With it we treat populations, memberships, exclusions and inclusions. Communities are, of course, collectivities or "social systems" of specific individuals. These have identities, and in description we select some and not others, and specify who is member, to be observed, and who is not. Once identified they can be counted, located, followed. Further, they can be described for the attributes we, observers, select or they, the observed, distinguish: age, sex, color, size, occupation, class, ethnicity, sect, etc. In dealing with human beings and their cultures we learned long ago to treat as significant those categoric attributes which the members of the community and culture inform us they discriminate and to connect these with behavior and organization. In dealing with animals, it is also a truism that behavior varies with category: age, sex, function. Communities, indeed, are unit minima organizing the individuals realizing such categories.

2. *Spaces* Communities occupy and use space and its contents, have territories the individuals exploit, create boundaries. They use such space and "environment" differentially. Upon space they produce what the geographer calls culture and the ecologist calls modification of the environment: dumps, blights, houses, canals, roads, harvests, etc. All these are such that maps can record. They assign space differentially to

their members, to individuals, to categories of individuals, to functional offices. Thereby they produce settlement patterns, land use and property distributions, assembly points and dispersal zones with tracks between, segregations of sex, age, class, occupation, rank, etc., and the things of each of these. Maps and charts can describe these, and every community and every culture patterns these but patterns them differently, as does every animal species, too. Obviously intricate connections interlace population and space use, (1) and (2) here.

3. *Times* Communities occupy their spaces in time. They alternately show dispersal of their persons (to the fields, to the hills, by the season, by day, etc.) with assemblage of them (in sleeping quarters, in ceremonies, in communal efforts, in war). There are climatic and economic rounds, calendars, shorter cycles of euphoria and dysphoria, longer rhythms of generational expansion or colonial budding, monthly, weekly, daily periodicities. There are periodic yields of the community's space and things in crops, in production, in volume of transactions or of traffic. All these are such that time rates can record. They engage the members differentially, and the description that tells us which members engage when and which do not in this action or that is a necessary complement to our knowing who they are and where the community places them. We cannot compare communities without confronting these periodicities from one community to the next. It is not enough merely to know that we already make imprecise temporal comparisons implicitly: sedentary versus transhumant communities, tight Apollonian sabbatarian ones versus loose Dionysian ones of occasional and irregular celebrations. We must discover in each case explicitly how the community specifically acts out its own sense of time.

4. *Functions* Furthermore, communities collectivize in their space, among their members, through their lives (which are generations long and thus longer than those of their members), many gains for individual and for social survival or advantage. We have named some of them already. These too must appear in our models and the gains must be spelled out. But the functions do not define the communities. Any culture has other ways of defense, of mate finding, of socializing, that extend beyond the community or that may supplant the community's. Likewise, communities, like other things, can develop dysfunctions, pain and thwart members, gain or lose functions, without losing identity. Yet some functional reason for any phenomenon's identity certainly exists. In this case the reason seems clear; we will risk repetition to point it out again. The record indicates that some local, continuing grouping of men or animals nearly always comes to exist. Bigger than the family or the mating pair, it insures continuity of the species. Where the species is human—to wit, a culture (for it is only in man that differentiation of kind takes not a genetic but a cultural form)—a characteristic minimal unit of per-

sonnel arises, as surely as in its animal counterpart, to subsist in space and endure over lives, sufficient to insure cultural transmission. Thus a human community, specifically, contains within it—and the content gives us both our definition and our problem—roles for every kind and office of mankind that the culture knows: husband, farmer, old man, mother, child, proletarian, priest, etc. A human community does this as surely as does one of ants, which, too, provides a role for every kind of ant the species has evolved: queen, worker, egg, soldier, larva. But the mechanisms, of course, are now known to be quite different.

Tables of functions performed for persons and for groups, then, are quite necessary tools for analysts of this unit of organization and continuity in cultural transmission in man, just as they are for physiologists of cells, organs, and organisms. But they are not more so than the maps and time charts we have already cited.

5. *Structure and Process* A model for a community, then, and any models we make for American ones, must put all these things together. It will represent, and help us explore, the characteristic minimal organization of the bearers of a culture in time and space. How will we put these things together; what devices will best represent them and the whole they make? Trial will tell. We cannot predict in advance, in the abstract. Devices for representing empirical structure and process must be invented, searched out of many prior human experiences, tried and fitted to reality again and again.

Once found, invented, tested, they will fit each community's use of time and space and function and follow each community's organization of roles, institutions, and personnel. The models will have form, carry out functions, show structure, unfold process, like the communities. They will both show the properties we know already and ready us to predict effects and also follow laws we do not yet know are theirs. The double promise of such models is the double promise of science: ordering of the commonplace and unexpected discovery of the unknown.

### *Community Patterns in the United States*

Let us now take the known historical communities of the United States and submit them to analysis. We can begin with the New England town.

#### THE NEW ENGLAND TOWN

There is much distinctive about the New England town. First, there is its historical (cultural) descent. I think it unnecessary to go into the long and difficult controversy within American history about the importation or the invention *in situ* of the New England town. Suffice it

to say that the eminent colonial historian Wertenbaker accepts the derivation of the New England town from the manorial village of the champion country of the English Midlands, whence most of the Puritans came, a derivation established by Homans. In the Midlands that village in turn was a local specialization of the open-field village of the North European plain. It was brought in to newly opened fenlands by Angles and Saxons from the Elbe mouth and was of a settlement pattern, village type, and agriculture quite different from that of once-Celtic western Britain and even from that of nearby once-Belgian and Jutish Kent. Nothing prevents inventors in a New World from elaborating, adapting, formalizing already familiar, even unconscious, heritages. In fact, that is the way anthropology tells us most cultural evolution (*anglice* "invention") proceeds. The urbanizing Puritans rationally planning new settlements in the wilderness were elaborating ancestral cultural materials and, as we shall see, every other American pioneer community did likewise.

Even the distribution of the New England town, its second distinctive trait, confirms its character as culture trait. The town about the green or common, with its centered church and town hall, seats of a single village-wide congregation and town meeting, with its town territory stretching out over fields and woods used by farmers and artisans clustered at the square rather than spread through the open countryside, went only where the New England Yankees went, mixed only where they mixed, survived or died only where they survived or died as a majority. Outside New England, as we know, that is only upstate New York and Long Island; in mixture, the Great Lakes country and the upper Middle West; in descent, Mormon Utah.

Distinctive measures of community use of personnel, space, and time require we create a very special model for the New England town, either for its heyday till the coming of the industrial revolution or for its crippled and dying modern isolated back-country remnant. Take membership first, and let us see who belonged. The nucleated settlement pattern made for close living; the neighbors were fellow-townsmen, visible and ever-present but not necessarily kinsmen. Endogamy, however, was fairly usual and exogamy not obligatory. In this the cultural tradition of the European and Near Eastern but not that of the Indian, Chinese, or African village was preserved, a community pattern which Murdock has mistaken for a kinship form he calls the "deme." Hence, fellows of the town were nearer than kinfolk, and kin moving off to another town soon fell away. The brittle, easily split "nuclear" or "democratic" ("Eskimoan") family, the *famille particulariste* of Le Play, native to North Europe, came with these Yankees from England and fitted well their egalitarian, unstratified farmer-artisan towns.

These Yankee towns were originally single congregations and au-

tonomous villages. They were under the rule of their own householders, as heads of families ("town fathers"), and of their own elders, who hired and fired their own clergy, determined their own orthodoxy, enforced conformity and morality, easily mistaking their own common one-class customs, under a Calvinist Protestantism freed of hierarchical and external control, for exclusive religious truth, through the whole gamut of custom from belief to sumptuary law and sabbath meeting. The same direct democracy among fathers and householders prevailed politically, under the larger framework of inherited English law, at least till the crown reasserted control, and the body of the congregants were also the town meeting, an assemblage of the whole. Church and town hall were one building or, if two, stood side by side on the village common, and only the drop of a gavel might separate religious from secular deliberations.

Only later were there any class distinctions, and these grew up *in situ* among kindred, on a functional basis. Later, on the eve of industrializing, classes and sections were to break away from Yankee equality. Poor pioneers were to break away on the outer western fringe, in the "burnt-over country" of York State, into Mormonism and the evangelical sects of the frontier; merchant patricians on the eastern edge were to give Boston and Unitarianism its distinctive character, in a move which left the Puritans' Congregationalism a core church and subculture, still confined to Puritan middle (and middle-class) territory. But, before all that, Yankees were farmers, artisans, shop-keeper-merchants, seamen and fishermen, without distinction or segregation either in community membership, political right, or use of living space. They were all townsmen together.

It may well be this culturally distinctive use of community space, not any agricultural poverty of New England, which made the Yankee an egalitarian jack-of-all-trades, both individualist in motive and deeply trained in civic co-operation and association. The nucleated village of the open-field agriculture of the North European plain shows many parallels to Yankee tradition, even as far out east as the Russian and Ukrainian *mir*. "National character" studies have still to work out what parallels in social organization and psychological traits in culture respond to substrata of common folk tradition and what to superstructures of state and national institutions of special political and historical development.

Thus, like some other *North* Europeans, these one-congregation, egalitarian villages lived by nuclear families, without much functional extended kinship, with equal division of inheritance, some freedom of divorce, and some ancestral near-equality of the sexes (later to flower in special American feminism). They had the habit of setting up children on their own quite young and of supporting the old and indigent "on the town." They had town officers, such as fenceviewers, weighmasters,

etc., remote descendants of the village servants, the gooseherds, cowherds, haywards, and swineherds of the medieval Old World. They displayed, too, the republican tradition of a Roman Cincinnatus, best described as a tendency to assign public office in rotation among "pillars of the community" (and of the church, the same thing) but otherwise to show extreme suspicion of one man's getting ahead of his neighbors, to the point of concealing wealth and understating ability.

Just as the consequences of the New England townsmen's use of space were marked, so were those of their use of time. Frequent daily intercourse of neighbours and townsfolk, continuous contact of the young people among themselves at each age of growing up, as well as enforced frequent sabbatarian communion, meant a dense collective experience, a chance for internalization of these rigidities of repetitive role and habit, a readiness to seek consensus coupled with a stubbornness of egalitarian judgment about which much has long been written. Yet little thought is given, outside the New England heritage, to the rarity of such "town meeting democracy" and "Puritan conscience" in the rest of the American scene. Even the generational rhythm of the New England town, which peopled much of the northern frontier (but far less than is usually assumed), was a use of long-wave time both distinctive and congruent with the nucleated, egalitarian "open-field village" of the cultural past. For it was in New England, and in New England alone, that towns, like Greek cities, sent out whole colonies of surplus young people, newly married church "elders" in their late teens, complete with church, town plan, minister, treasury, etc., in short, a full apparatus for nucleated community living. Only the Mormon community and culture, later-day offshoots of New England, still expands so, in our own present, as they spread up into the Bitterroot Mountains of Idaho, town by town up the mountain valleys.

If this Yankee community, the New England town, is a faithful microcosm in its distinctive pattern of the New England culture in its region and in its epochs of rise and flower, are there other American communities equally distinct? Yes, there are many, as we shall see, and we can find others at once in two other well-known original colonial regions where the first American cultures were established.

#### THE SOUTHERN COUNTRY

For ease of recognition, it is best to turn next to the American Old South, tracing it from its Tidewater beginnings through its Deep South extensions south and west over three centuries of movement toward Texas and California. As we shall see, the original sectionalism, North and South, was a too easy division of the complex country, even in colonial times, but it is so familiar that we can begin with it. We know a great deal about this Old South, counterpoise to the Yankee

North, but have we analyzed its historical form of community? Plantations, poor whites, Negro slavery, Anglicanism and Methodism, "Bourbonism" and Fundamentalism, are culture traits we did not need to mention for New England. However, it is not the new traits but their organization into a community of new personnel, space, time, functions, and form that we must specify.

The distinctive community form of the South was and is the county. Dispersed a day's ride in and out around the county seat, that community assembled planter and field- or house-hand from the fat plantations, free poor white or Negro from the lean hills and swamps, for the pageantry and the drama of Saturdays around the courthouse, when the courthouse, the jail, the registry of deeds, and the courthouse square of shops and lawyers' row made a physical center of the far-flung community. This is the American counterpart of the Spanish and Portuguese *municipio*, the French and German *commune* and *Gemeinde*, the rural counterpart of the baroque capital which Mumford called the city of the palace and the parade. It is a product of the same age, the age of the rise of the national state, whose community form it represents.

It is a mistake to treat this county and county seat for its separate parts and to try to find the community in the Old South at any other level. The poor white or Negro hamlets about a country church, set in hill or swamp retreat, the plantation, however large and proud and populous, the county seat as town (older ones seldom had distinctive organs apart from their function as county seat), were and are none of them complete communities. The county itself was the unit of dispersal and assemblage, and it was a two-class community from its inception in the gathering-in of nobles into the king's palace and capital along with *noblesse de robe* and rich *bourgeois*. Formed from the coming together of landowner and *peón*, its pattern of dispersal was a double one, with estates covering the good land, and little men, now clients, now runaways, taking up the leavings in the bad. Nowhere is the church, even the baroque cathedral, the center of this community, either physically or spiritually. There are many churches, and these split along the lines of class or ethnicity: rural chapels in the hamlets and the *barrios*, fundamentalist sectarian or Indianly "superstitious," and city ones, seats of fashion and elegance. The church, both as building and as institution, is overshadowed by another, cynosure of all eyes, seat of power and decision, repository of land grants and commercial debt-bonds: the courthouse, the "palacio."

The county of the Old South, spread across the land to California but purest in the Tidewater and the Black Belt, is the American community form of the Baroque Age. Its distinctly American accents—Methodism, Baptism, and White Supremacy—like the distinct American pattern of race relations to which it gave rise, do not separate it gener-

ically from its Latin and Old World counterparts. It received, like the New England town, much of English law and of North European and British Protestantism, two culture elements that never penetrated Latin America, but it reworked these into forms which have no semblance of the forms New England gave these things. In no particular of community form can we find the Southern county like the New England town. Neither in land use, nor in dispersal and assemblage, nor in use of time, nor in deploy of functions, is there anything in which the one community resembles the other, despite their common institutional elements and borrowings. And the cultures were and are just as different as the two communities which miniature them.

These two American communities, then, are easily recognizable and as easily contrasted, and it is not hard to see their reflection of their regional American cultures. It is not hard, either, to make similar recognition of well-documented ethnic-minority communities and their reflected cultures in some other instances. The Spanish-New Mexican culture of the Southwest is mirrored faithfully in such a village as the El Cerrito of Leonard and Loomis, lineal descendant of the Castillian *pueblo*, the centered wheat-village of Spain; the Mormon village of Nelson, descendant of the New England town out of upstate Yankee New York, has already been cited, if its palpable miniaturizing of the Mormon culture is not yet fully spelled out. The Cajun line-village, blood descendant of northern French line-villages of France and Canada, is less well known, beyond Smith's references. This is because the Cajun culture itself is as yet unstudied, though the very form of the line-village would suggest that the *famille souche* way of life that Miner found in St. Denis would hardly fall out of an association with this community which marks the French and their children from Normandy to the bayou country. These minority ethnic communities and cultures of the United States are not unpredictable. It is rather to other cultures or subcultures of the "majority" population of the country that we should turn. With them we enter upon scenes less well stereotyped, where our thesis that communities microcosm cultures gets a stiffer test.

#### CROSSROADS HAMLETS AND MAIN STREET TOWNS

Very much less known are the cultural derivation and continuation, and the communities, of the great American middle country. The American historian Wertenbaker, referred to earlier, reminds us that the Middle Colonies were just that. They were ethnically neither New England Yankee (English Puritan) nor Southern Cavalier. They were Swedish, Dutch, Quaker English, Welsh, Pennsylvania German, Scots-Irish, and many mixtures of these elements. From the Middle Colonies, too, came two new regions: the Middle West, recipient of streams from all three distinctive seaboard colonial sections but by-and-large con-



tinuant of the adjacent Middle Colonies rather than of off-center New England and the South, and the Middle or Appalachian Frontier.

These two new regions, in a historical order the reverse of our naming them here, were the first American regions to stand clear, to rise out of mixture and to shape new and free conditions. They remain distinct today. Any list of American regions must count them in, though the names are various. The best recent treatment of regional cultures still lists them as the Appalachian-Ozark region (i.e., the better-known Hill South) and the Cornbelt. But under any name they must be treated as the full-fledged and distinctive regional cultures that they are. Again, like the original Middle Colonies, that seedbed of mixture that parented them, they still call their majority members by the only possible name: "Americans." Other older regions, where mixture was less, have their own names for such majority members, reminiscent of some degree of common ethnic origin: "Yankees" and "Southerners" of "English ancestry." The majority members of the regions Frontier and Midwest have no such ease in naming themselves. They are only "Americans," not "English stock," except in mix, but as often children of Scots, Welsh, Irish, Germans, Scandinavians, Slavs, Latins, and the endless other in-wanderers since. Only the common name will do. The culture that united and unites under that name the diverse minorities of the great Atlantic migration was a local emergent from such mix, and it still must be recognized in three versions: Middle Colonial (now called Middle Atlantic), Frontier (now Appalachian), and Middlewestern.

Are there, then, three American communities to match these three American cultures of the preindustrial past? Are there three, or more, community forms common to our joint national experience of the United States palpably different from the New England town and the Southern county? Indeed there are. They are dealt with often enough in the literature, both scientific and popular, but they have not been recognized for what they are. Only when we put our comparative tests to work and ask about comparative uses of persons, space, time, function, and form do we see that the differences from New England and Southern experience which we all know mark Middle Atlantic, Appalachian, and Middlewestern life are systematic and thus cultural. Only then do we see that our common experience reflects identifiable community forms, not yet recognized comparatively, and that these forms, like those of the town and the county cited so far, faithfully give body to units of their regional cultures.

First of all, there is the matter of the community's use of space. These three regions, a parent and two offspring, share in common their patterns of dispersal and assemblage, facts better known under the rubric "settlement pattern." The distinctively American settlement pattern, an "open-country neighborhood" (*Einzelhofsiedlung*), marks all three of

these regions as it does *not* the Plantation South and New England. Whence came this new, now all-American pattern? Before cultural anthropology flourished, it was all too easy to derive such patterns of land use from the necessities of the frontier, or the rational plans of colonizers and land speculators, or the workings of individual ownership and republican ideals. Cultural anthropology, however, teaches us that we must look for the native covert custom and value that underlie such necessities and rationalities. The human mind (perhaps always) works with some prior experience in adapting to new conditions, not in a vacuum, and it needs some experience other than pure logic to rationalize. Just as it was all too easy to assume, till we learned its Swedish derivation, that the log cabin was a "natural" adaptation to the frontier, so is it all too easy to think this settlement pattern, and the communities which came of it, was "naturally" and not culturally given.

The truth of the matter, however, is cultural. The Middle Atlantic region received as its pioneer settlers, of all those who came to the colonies, the very immigrants who already practiced not village or plantation life but *Einzelhof* dispersal of individual farms. The Dutch, especially the Frisians, already put individual farms on polder plots at home. The Pennsylvania "Dutch" (Palatinate, Swiss, Rhenish, and Westfalian) brought individual *Grossbauer* family farms of mixed, intensive agriculture with them from their homelands to fill up the Appalachian valley floors from the Delaware seaboard to the Susquehanna and thence south up the Shenandoah. And the Scots-Irish, that new English-speaking mix of Celts arising in Ulster and the English frontier in Ireland, a group without a name (except "Orangemen" or "Presbyterian") till William Cullen Bryant invented one here for them in 1870, filled up the mountainsides and the forest coves and clearings beyond the English and Quaker towns, farm by farm, with a few cows and a saddle bag of corn seed, from New Hampshire to the Great Smokies, in a New World repetition of the same Celtic dispersed-farm cattle-and-kitchen-garden agriculture that marks Irish small farms and Scots crofts to this day.

Certainly the Revolutionary Land Grants to soldiers and the later Homestead Acts rationalized and generalized open-country individual farm settlement on the Frontier and in the Old Northwest that soon became a mere "Middle," but the pattern was already laid down in the Middle Colonies. Yankees went to the frontier in wagon trains, to planned villages, and Southerners, some of them, to plantations and county seats cut from the virgin woods, but the Midlanders did neither. They went singly, family by family, into the lands they cleared simply by accretion of farms into "neighborhoods." Their first communities were mere crossroads where scattered neighbors met. Their schools and churches and stores, like their camp meetings and their fairs, were set haphazardly in the open country or where roads met, with no ordered

clustering and no fixed membership. But this "pioneer community" is no accident, no "natural" growth of the American frontiers, not even of "isolation" and sparse population. For those who know comparative cultures its Old World origin is plain, and this supposedly "natural," "primitive" pattern is as culturally distinctive and complete as any other.

In such communities the settlers' unit of government, like their point of assemblage, was no town nor *any* fixed place. It was instead a rural "township" or several such diffuse authorities. It was not a single centering but instead a fluid crisscrossing net of emergent countrysides and cantons, variously linking farms in overlapping paths among spreading neighbors, kindred, and fellow-sectarians, about crossroad hamlets or open grounds of infrequent gathering. Even today in the Middle country, from New Jersey to the Rockies, this is the older community form in the countryside, and it persists among the farms despite the growth of towns, burgs, counties, and service centers, marks of later urban consolidation. Even today, in the middle country, the townsman is a separate creature, with no place or vote in the countryside, just as the farmer, chief support of Main Street though he be, is not a citizen of the burg he patronizes but lives and votes beyond the corporate boundaries of the town. Here, in all the middle country, the centered town, either as county seat or as residence of farmers, New England style, is an afterthought. The older communities were the open-country neighborhoods.

Now this sort of community, a rural network of relationships running across countrysides and cantons, round occasional and ephemeral centers of assemblage at shrine or fair or crossroads hamlet, this origin of open-country neighborhoods and townships without urban centering, is honestly come by. As a heritage of culture form it is not unique in the world. To the cultural anthropologist who brings Atlantic Europe into his ken it is very familiar. This is the settlement pattern, community form and cantonal rural republican social organization that marks the fringe of the Atlantic from the Berber country north through "wet Spain" and the Basque and Celtic lands to West Britain, Scotland, and Scandinavia. It is the very community which marked the lands whence the Middle Colonists, so many if not all of them, came. Far older in Europe than the open-field village, or the pueblo, the *latifundium*, and the *municipio*, it is no wonder that its recrudescence and generalization in the English-language cultures' spread across the continent should seem to gentle-folk or pious townsmen a reversion to the primitive. But a submerged culture pattern is not lost, nor is it by reason of submergence any the less capable of further growth. On the Frontier, in the Appalachian regions, this community reflected well till just the other day the mostly Scots-Irish-derived culture. Loose, open, Dionysian, kin-based, *famille-souche*, and subsistence farming rather than commercial- or urban-minded, egalitarian through isolation and personal honor rather

than through conscience and congregational control, this culture and this community were and are a match. Both are age-long Atlantic European heritages which Americans have not lost and are not likely to lose in the future. This community, like this culture, is as different from either the town or the county we have already named as is sober Saxon different from wild Scot in the British homeland or Andalusian and Gallego in Spain.

When the settled towns did come to the American frontier, as they had come not so long before to the Atlantic European frontiers, they did not change the community forms of the three Middle cultures of the United States out of hand. The new communities that still exist in the Middle Colonies and the Hill South and the Middle West built around urban centers are neither free of the ethnic traditions of those colonies nor deeply planted in older urbanism like the cities that grew up in New England and the Deep South. There has been no final supplanting of this Atlantic-European dispersed-settlement cultural tradition but rather a mingling and borrowing of traits, in which the older traditions have been deepened and transformed. The Hillman and the Midwesterner are not gone, nor are they likely to disappear, and the different continuities they represent back to pre-Roman, pre-German, pre-Christian Atlantic Europe are nonetheless great because anthropology has just barely come to search for them. When today Zimmerman and Du Wors report Middlewestern Cornbelt and Great Plains towns seeking newer industrial and civic forms, commercializing and abandoning the open countryside for in-town residence, the anthropological reader stands before a further cultural succession and adaptation not yet known in any form, transforming an older "Middle America" still little understood.

In all this, however, we must not neglect the great transformations of internal and continuing cultural evolution. New cultures have overtaken the United States, and new cultures, like old ones, must be expected to show in new communities new organization. The cultures and communities of the social organism called the U.S.A. are no longer confined by any means to those brought by the original settlers of either seacoast or frontier.

The great transformations of the industrial revolution, which ushered in our first great new cultural age, brought also a new community. Naturally, if a community microcosms a culture, then so does a cultural revolution bring along as well a revolution in community form, if the correspondence of the two is to keep pace. That such a new community form struck the United States, beginning in New England and spreading slowly west and south, we already know. It remains only to show how the mill town and factory city, which long ago first supplanted and still continue to supplant the New England town, the Southern county seat, and the open-country neighborhoods and crossroads hamlets of older

America, are in fact small and big exemplars of a new community form.

Here, of course, I follow the trail that Mumford (1937) blazed. He showed graphically the huge revolution in living, in cultural and social organization, that the cities of factory and slum brought in. Park and Burgess went on to show us the form within the outward formlessness of Chicago, the railroad city of concentric zones and dynamic succession and decay, the American industrial city in its heyday of 1905. Later in the early thirties when Lynd went to an American "Middletown" it was to such an industrial town, and when Warner and his students gave us Yankee City and Natchez and Jonesville, in New England, South, and Middle West, it was still to mill towns that they went. For mill towns had invaded and transformed all the older communities, just as the Coal and Iron Age sooted up the older rural culture-horizons.

What, then, is a mill town, a factory city, as community form? First, it is a new and distinctive use of space. The new slum-building ("industrial blight"), and the other dynamic succession-and-withdrawal patterns of land and building use in industrial cities, are perfectly lawful and formal patterns, congruent and coincident with the monetarization and the commercialization of the cultural age of the free market and the laissez-faire capitalism they represent. The mill town, born in Britain, has spread, in greater or lesser conjunction with these other patterns of its age, like any other culture wave. It has spread out and around the world for a century and a half, and it is only now in recession and change. In U.S.A. the same mill towns (standard Midwestern American calls them "factory town") web from New England, whence the New England flavor of their name. Mill towns are dying as captured satellites of a still newer metropolitan community form in the homeland, while they win new territory in continuous diffusion into the Southern and Southwestern and Appalachian regions. In all these spreads and migrations the mill-town forms are constant despite accidents of local circumstance and graft to former patterns.

This use of space is telltale. Far from being merely chaotic and lawless, the "unplanned" form the early industrial cities of America took was a new and distinctive (if unlovely) community form. The new use of space gives us the typical banded and stratified zonal ordering of better and better houses from the slums in the industrial valley, on Water Street and River Street, down by the docks or behind the railroad yards, up to the massed squires' houses on the Hill.

This use of space bands and zones the middle-class dwellings and the middle-class shops in the middle and crams the mills and the warehouses and the industrial warrens of factory workers and immigrant hands in the narrow blighted bottoms which once were the market-places and the crossroads of the older towns. It creates a new assemblage center in the railroad station and the "downtown center" about it and a

new pattern of withdrawal whereby the same railroad or the avenues—pushing out the “Main Line”—put the better-off and higher occupations of the common factories on which all depend in progressively farther removed residential blocks. It makes visible in external display these graded and successive zones of better or worse neighborhoods and mirrors perfectly an open-class system’s scalar stratification of incomes, of power, and of prestige in the zonal successions one sees moving inward from withdrawn garden suburb to blighted tenement district.

The once-new mill town’s use of time is of a pattern with this use of space. The commutation lines of streetcar and train and the staggered hours of arrival at work, like the loss of play space and park space to mills, yards, and streets, and the sharp separation of work and leisure, spell out in space and time a community tuned to the factory whistle, stratified according to him who obeys it and him who orders it blown, and united about the mill and its livelihood for worker and owner alike. The mill town is the community of the Victorian industrial age, and it is so much with us, especially in memory and survival, that we need hardly spell it out further. But it is also a community form in perfect harmony with the layered, visible, and pecuniary stratification of its age, with the fluid dynamism of its progressive exhaustion and befouling of an environment which in its heyday, as we now know from a hundred commentators, its people treated first and foremost as a workshop for their machines. It is no wonder, then, that the “open-class system” (or the six-class system, if you prefer Warner) and the “pecuniary civilization” should have a distinctive community form in the mill town and its succession, its blight, and its mechanical massing of visible likes and unlikes.

But the once-new mill town and the sooty, cluttered Pittsburghs and Birminghams of a proud Victorian industrial age are no longer young. They are things in transformation, and a new age, with a new community, has fast supplanted them in its turn. On a hundred fronts the new age of the automobile, of the branch factory with the career manager, of the metropolitan mass-communication city and suburb, of the leveling of incomes and proliferating of “peer groups” and equalized consumptive standards, of the “building back” and clearance of slums and huge desertion of the downtown cities for the Levittowns and highway shopping centers and “rurban fringes” of midcentury, comes relentlessly on. The new age is perhaps easiest to see in the new cities and suburbs built since the automobile, like Los Angeles, and hardest to accept in the blighted and abandoned industrial cities of yesteryear. But all the voices agree that it has come.

The new community that corresponds to the newest age is much less understood or even perceived. Yet there is a good deal of writing about it that gives us some evidence of the new form the new metropolitan community has taken or will take. The difficulty is to see the

new form whole, rather than in disconnected pieces, and for that, as before, a model must serve.

What are the pieces, then, that we must fit into such a comprehensive model? First, as always, there is the matter of use of space. The new metropolitan community, first charted by McKenzie, is the circle of one and a half to two hours commuting by car from the old downtown railroad centers of the city, from which the new mass communications of newspapers, radio, and television now radiate. The various metropolitan district devices and authorities in evolution today, for water, parks, belt highway, and port controls, seem to be political attempts to cope with the metropolis of this huge area and population. With numbers divided in many cases nearly half and half between the outer ring of once independent suburban and satellite settlements and the inner city, neither suburb nor core city will give up the jealous independence of the last century. (New York has not expanded its city's official boundaries since 1895, three generations ago.) Only some new over-arching authority can match the new city form.

Within this huge metropolitan space, the new supercity is struggling to take the form of a great wheel of internal traffic arteries and peripheral belts. New factories appear in the empty fields on the outer fringe, where highways and belt roads serve them better than any railroads, and new dormitory suburbs mushroom to bring workers to them or to move workers and white-collars, now less distinguishable, into greener quarters and automotive mobility. At the nodes between artery and belts, between spokes and rims of the great new urban wheel-form, huge new shopping centers arise which duplicate in all particulars, except the centering of mass communications for the whole itself, the erstwhile downtown congestions of traffic, shopping, business, and entertainment. This is the great decentralized city of the automotive age, and no planning can reverse its evolution, just as no plans which belie its form, from traffic roads to slum clearance, can do more than delay or impede its taking its characteristic shape.

In the great and small segments of the huge circle that artery and belt highways cut out, a new urban life—better, a new suburban one—is already well emerged. This is the life of the “peer groups” of the “lonely crowd” which Riesman rightly sees. It is a huge mosaic of massed segregations of age, class, and ethnic group. Because older withdrawn suburbs, new real-estate developments of massed conformity, enclaved factory satellite towns, old slums and factories, and built-back reclaimed areas are all grown together now and stand contiguous in the unbroken urban-suburban expanse, little remains of the old gradations and transitions between house type and house type and class and class. The old graduated concentric zones of the industrial city are fast disappearing. The mosaic that takes their place is a crazy-quilt of discon-

tinuities, where the fault-line between toney garden suburb and Levittown or rich Sutton Place and squalid Dead End is abrupt, sudden, and hostile, sometimes even policed with a guard or marked by a ten-foot fence. It is no wonder that the persons who grow up in such juxtapositions see nothing of the community pattern as a whole, no longer have intimate connection with and reference toward ordered groups a little "better" or a little "worse" than themselves, but turn inward instead to the welter of their peer-group segregations.

The mosaic of discontinuities of age, class, and ethnicity which is the new metropolitan community is a very different one indeed from the visibly hierarchic and mobile community that preceded it. It is not for us here to explore its new features; the subject is doubly difficult because so few people, in or out of social science, have yet learned to look at the metropolitan city whole. Nevertheless, the new cultural form, with its new social and economic traits and problems, is here before us, in the most violent emergence, and the new age has already found its new unit of transmission and organization.

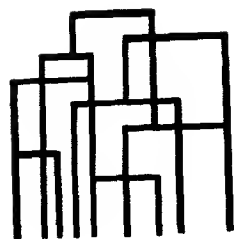
### *Recapitulation*

Enough has been said, in a short paper, to document for the United States a perception that is emerging from comparative ethnological research wherever community studies have been carried out. For every American regional (sub-) culture that we can distinguish in American society and civilization, a particular form of the community is to be found. The ones we have spelled out here, each one quite different according to the measures that serve for all communities, are, as they have been often treated by novelists and historians, quite viable microcosms of the cultures whose *florebat* they graced: the New England towns, the southern county, the open-country neighborhood and crossroads hamlet of the Atlantic region, the frontier and the Appalachians, the Main Street "service-center" (so the sociologists call what Midwesterners know as "a burg"), the Mormon village, the mill town, the metropolitan conglomeration. We have not touched them all; conspicuously absent is the California city of the communities of the factories-in-the-field, with the neat two-class separation of the bungalows of Caucasian overseers and members of the Associated Farmers and the Hoovervilles of the successive migratory laborers, an agricultural factory town well known round the plantation world of commerce overseas. But we have touched the significant majority, and we have answered the question with which we began.

There is in the United States a form of the community for every recognized American culture. Certainly here and perhaps everywhere the correlation of community and culture is one to one.



# 33 Urban Anthropology: Its Present and Future<sup>1</sup>



John Gulick

IT WAS THE PREVIOUS ARTICLE BY CONRAD ARENSBERG (II:32) THAT CARRIED the entire burden of urban anthropology in the first edition of these Readings. Interest in cities has long been a feature of anthropology, but it is quite true that that interest was not spread very far among anthropologists. The few people who turned to it usually did so sporadically and as a supplement to other activities, frequently an interest in applied anthropology or industrial sociology. Indeed, it was in the realm of urban studies that a truly significant division of labor between sociologist and anthropologist seemed discernible.

Now that is in the process of changing. Partly the change is due to outside pressure as government agencies and other interested bodies have clamored for more research on and analysis of cities in order to deal with escalating problems. Anthropologists have been found particularly useful for conducting intensive community studies, in-depth problem-

<sup>1</sup> This paper was presented at a joint meeting of the Division of Anthropology of the N. Y. Academy of Sciences and the American Ethnological Society on January 28, 1963.

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*oriented studies, and investigations into intra- and inter-ethnic questions.*

*It would not be fair to regard the growth of anthropological interest in modern cities as an opportunistic response to newly available research funds. Concern with the understanding of urban processes and problems is implicit in the history of the discipline. Given their professional orientation, anthropologists enrich the studies of urban society and culture by supplying a comparative and cross-cultural perspective. This will immediately become apparent in this article by John Gulick which reviews some of the things that have already been done and speculates about future developments.*

At first glance, the phrase "urban anthropology" may seem like a contradiction in terms. In most people's minds the urban environment is objectively different from, if not antithetical to, the environments of pastoral band and small village with which anthropology is commonly associated.

Yet, because of their commitment to the all-inclusive idea of culture, anthropologists tend to claim the universal applicability of their principles of human behavior and accordingly have made sweeping pronouncements on the nature and problems of whole societies, many of which include urban environments (or cities). So, indirectly and probably often unwittingly, anthropologists have encompassed cities. But only to a very minor extent, in comparison to the research they have done elsewhere and in comparison to the research which non-anthropologists have done in cities, have they done research directly in and on cities. Can or should they do more? If they can and should, how best can they contribute to a better understanding of the complexities of the urban environment? In undertaking an essay on urban anthropology, I am primarily concerned with these basic questions. Yet as we will soon discover, the search for answers leads to further questions which probe the foundations of anthropology itself.

Some anthropologists, perhaps most of them, may simply not want to do research in cities. They should certainly not be called upon to concoct any "theoretical position" in order to make their personal preferences "defensible." Nevertheless, there are certain facts that all anthropologists, regardless of personal preferences, should face:

First, rapidly increasing numbers and proportions of mankind are living in urban environments. Furthermore, something called "urbanization" is perceived in many communities which are not themselves "urban."

Second, despite several decades of intensive research and theorizing, urban sociologists have not succeeded in devising any really satisfactory conceptualizations of the urban environment. Don Martindale, in his prefatory remarks to a recent edition of Max Weber's book *The City*, sums up the situation bluntly in these words: "Everything is present

(in books on the city) except the one precise essential that gives life to the whole. When all is said and done the question remains, what is the City?"

Third, non-anthropologists are beginning to do research in the cities of cultures which have primarily been the concern of anthropologists. Furthermore, it is not an anthropologist but a sociologist, Gideon Sjöberg, who, fully aware of the conceptual inadequacies of his own discipline, has written a cross-cultural comparative study of nonindustrial and mostly non-western cities.

These facts (some of which are definitely trends and all of which may be) present opportunities, challenges, and possibly threats to contemporary anthropology. Obviously, more anthropological research in and on cities could lead to our taking advantage of the opportunities and constructively meeting the challenges and possible threats. However, we have only begun to deal with the problem of imprecise definitions of key terms which, in turn, are reflections of a series of untidy concepts.

The word "city" has been used to designate almost every type and size of living settlement except the pastoral band and the small village whose primary ecological function is self-subsistence. "City," therefore, and the associated words "urban" and "urbanism," have been applied indiscriminately to settlements of a few thousand to those of several million inhabitants. Yet it does not require any social science expertise to discern that the Borough of Manhattan is markedly different in terms of living arrangements from, for example, Greensboro, North Carolina. Greensboro's population is less than one tenth that of Manhattan, comes mostly from the immediately surrounding hinterland, lives in separate houses rather than apartments, and does not have to devote major amounts of time to commuting. Recent research in Greensboro suggests that few of its inhabitants have those social sentiments and problems which are supposedly typical of city people. Yet no social science theories have yet been advanced which obviate our putting Manhattan and Greensboro into the same intellectual categories of "city" and "urban" and consequently making certain uniform assumptions about them. If such poverty of conceptual discrimination is a hallmark of professional thinking about American industrial cities, one can be certain that it is even more so of the array of so-called cities in other cultures about which far less information is available. As to the supposedly typical sentiments of city life, which were viewed with alarm so influentially by the Chicago urban sociologists, the following should suffice by way of comment. An Africanist has recently told me that by selecting certain of his data from a West African city and generalizing them to the whole, he can make the city sound like a stereotypic folk community. By selecting other data from the same city and generalizing them to the whole, he can make it sound like Wirth's stereotype of the city!

While we are not in a position to propose a satisfactory definition of the urban environment, we can suggest a conceptual cutting point between non-urban communities and the various types of community to which we currently give the monolithic designation of urban. We discover this cutting point in those communities whose most prominent inhabitants know and are known personally by only a minority of the total inhabitants. This cutting point has implications for minimal size and possibly for minimal but still recognizable degrees of cultural heterogeneity. But it allows us to make no *a priori* assumptions about social stratification, occupational specialization, the intensity of affectional interpersonal ties, the absolute extent of interpersonal ties, or of the city's being an "organism" which is the opposite of the folk community. The building of such assumptions into definitions of "urban" and "urbanization" has contributed confusion at the outset in urban research. In any case, it is at the minimal cutting point that we will think of urban anthropology's beginning and then proceeding to more complex communities.

If the city defies close definition, so does "anthropology" (cultural anthropology, that is, as distinct from archeology and physical anthropology). Certainly definitions exist, but they are all so broad that they encompass the other social sciences as well. This is due to the globalness of the concept of culture, to the mystique of anthropological field work, and to the fact that most anthropological research has been done in small-scale, intensive field situations in which there has been little competition from the practitioners of other types of behavioral study.

Commitment to the concept of culture, to the functionalistic and holistic frame of reference, and to the type of research experience known roughly as participant observation in small-scale social settings in non-western and/or non-industrial cultures; these tend to be what anthropologists think and do. Yet, there are good anthropologists who vary from these tendencies, and there are non-anthropologists who share in them.

We shall proceed with the pragmatic viewpoint, namely that anthropology is what anthropologists think and do. This tautology may have served well enough in the past, but it should by now be sufficiently irritating to incline us toward improving it. This inclination will become a necessity when and if anthropologists try in earnest to discover what their discipline can best contribute to urban research, and how.

Let us take a cross-cultural look at the existing contemporary literature on cities. This literature is actually enormous and the first task in surveying it is to select those items which are either by anthropologists or present data in such a way that they are useful or of interest to anthropologists. Primarily, we will take note of studies by anthropologists and anthropologically relevant studies by non-anthropologists which

have been done in the cities of cultures traditionally studied by anthropologists, though not in their urban aspects. These culture areas are Africa south of the Sahara, Latin America, and Asia from the Middle East to Japan.

A few North American and European anthropologists have made some studies in the industrial cities of their own cultures. Primarily for arbitrary reasons of convenience, I shall not give these studies further consideration in this paper. These studies clearly fall within the category of urban anthropology, however, unless of course there are those who would insist, if the chips were down, that one isn't really "doing" anthropology unless one is in surroundings exotic to oneself.

The nearest approach to what might be called systematic urban anthropology has been achieved in Africa south of the Sahara. Some indication of this achievement is suggested by the monumental symposium volume which was published by UNESCO in 1956. This volume is far more comprehensive than a comparable work on Latin American which was published five years later, and this comment is by no means intended to denigrate the Latin American volume *per se*.

Although Americans and continental Europeans have made important contributions to African urban anthropology, the main impetus seems to have come from British social anthropologists who of course already had a head start in Africa by the end of World War II when African urban anthropology apparently first began to gather momentum. The British social anthropologists not infrequently call themselves sociologists, a habit which has not been lost upon polemically-inclined American colleagues. Polemics aside, this practice may indicate that our British colleagues see less of a gulf between themselves and sociology than we are wont to do. For example, survey techniques are frequently, if not typically, employed in the African research with which we are concerned. Survey techniques may, at the moment anyway, be un-anthropological but can American anthropologists afford to continue to feel that somehow they are *anti-anthropological*? Actually, there are now some anthropologists who do not feel this way, but if their feelings crystallize into a definite professional movement, what will its effect be on anthropology as a whole?

If there is a methodological gulf between American anthropology and sociology, there is a conceptual presupposition which they share: This is, that the defining criteria of urbanness are the elements of the Chicago urban stereotype. In recent years, it has become rather popular to set up this stereotype as a straw man to knock down. However, it keeps bobbing up again in its pristine form and in somewhat updated guises such as the notion of "mass culture." Oversimplified in conception, overgeneralized in application, subjective and emotion-laden though it is, it keeps bobbing up again because it is still the only con-

ceptual device we have for visualizing the fact that social life in the midst of large aggregates does have some differences from social life in small aggregates.

Now, the British urban anthropologists in Africa do not seem to be so possessed by the Chicago stereotype as we are. Rather, their studies of culture change in rural areas seem to have led "naturally" to studies of adaptations of rural people in the city and from that to some considerations of the nature of the African city itself. Their studies show a concern for ecological problems, kinship (beginning with household composition), indices of group identities, and symbolic and ritual practices. These are all "stock" anthropological topics, and despite the fact that many of the data were gathered by questionnaire and formal interview, one still is given the feeling of living people coping with a living environment. This is a quality which anthropologists cherish and whose absence from most American urban sociology they feel keenly.

African urban anthropologists are alert to problems of methodology. There is acceptance of the dangers inherent in generalizing from intensive work with only a few informants. There is equal recognition of the fact that the verbal nature of survey data must be checked against observations of actual behavior in order to be accepted with real confidence. The solution, as was discussed several years ago by William B. Schwab, is obvious, namely a combination of anthropological "depth" methods and survey methods. However, though the solution may be obvious in theory it is not easy in execution. Must or should the research team be used? What kinds of information can best be obtained by survey, what other kinds of information can best be obtained by the so-called depth interview, and what kinds of information can best be obtained in the traditional anthropological fashion which is really more of a short-term "way of life" than it is "a technique"? These are questions which are being struggled with by some African urban anthropologists. There is not much evidence that they are currently being seriously considered by anthropologists in general. They are epistemological questions. If anthropology is to be defined more effectively than "what anthropologists do," if, in other words, it is to be defined in terms of what anthropologists as such are really looking for, then the working out of some good answers is imperative.

Currently in preparation is a series of papers by Africanists in which systematic clarification will be sought on the kinds of methodological and conceptual problems which are being considered here. However, even if a really rigorous set of definitions of "urbanism," for example, is achieved, it will probably be of specifically African urbanism and may not be automatically applicable to our thinking about cities elsewhere and in general. The literate tradition in African cities, in contrast to Asian ones, is of recent and exotic origin. The great importance of farm-

ing among many west African city dwellers, South African Apartheid policies, and the frequent "company town" aspect of many communities there may be additional factors which might affect conceptions of African city life in a somewhat particularistic way. In other words, it would be a mistake if we counted upon African urban anthropology's providing all the solutions to the problems of urban anthropology in general.

Shifting our attention to Latin America and to Asia, we discover that the contributions of anthropologists to urban studies in these areas are infinitesimal compared to those of demographers, economists, geographers, historians and planners. Characteristically and significantly, amid all this large literature it is difficult to find any extensive discussions of city life in these areas which convey a very clear image of what that life is like. The nearest approximations to such information (which is heavily emphasized by anthropologists in other contexts) are likely to be contributed by some of the geographers and planners who share with the anthropologist an interest in the details of the immediate physical environment and their impact on man.

In Latin America, urban studies by anthropologists, or studies which one feels are of direct interest to anthropologists, seem to be concerned particularly with aspects of differential social prestige in the city. A notable example is the study by A. H. Whiteford and his associates of social classes in two moderate-sized cities. Methodologically, Whiteford's study is a landmark. He used surveys and questionnaires leavened by long-term residence and immersion in the life of the communities. The results are impressive. But they required the coordination of a team over several years, and those who have serious objections to Warner's social class criteria will have serious objections to Whiteford's findings. Progress in Latin American urban anthropology cannot, in practical terms, necessarily be best made by trying to replicate this particular study, although the model it sets of endeavoring to analyze the whole city and its parts should be followed.

The other Latin American studies which are concerned with urban social differentiation deal primarily with the poor. There is quite a substantial literature on the social and ritual life of slum dwellers in Brazilian and circum-Caribbean towns and cities. Much of this work was apparently done by sociologists, but its specificity and/or vividness make it of anthropological interest and relevance. And then of course there are Oscar Lewis's studies of misery in Mexico City and among the Puerto Ricans. Whether Lewis's protagonists would be equally miserable if they lived in a rural community is a pertinent but open question. The fact remains that these vivid, detailed and moving case portraits have a city background. To quite a few anthropologists it is apparently of little importance that we can only guess how frequent or widespread are cases of

this sort. What is important to many (perhaps most?) anthropologists is that here we have sharply etched vignettes of life in all its interpersonal complexity—the kind of information we all wish we had more of in our own field notes and publications. This kind of anthropology puts a premium on careful, sensitive observation and on intuition, but these are faculties which are by no means exercised exclusively by anthropologists, among the various articulate observers of human life. Once we have recovered from the emotional jolt of these studies, we must admit that it is hardly surprising that such lives are led in a population as large as that of Mexico City, or in much smaller ones for that matter. What can we do with such information besides empathize with it? We can and should develop hypotheses concerning cause and frequency and then test them. This is the kind of challenge that a developed urban anthropology would have to accept in order to prove itself among the other disciplines which are seeking greater understanding of the nature of life in the city. Lewis himself suggests that the problems of his people are concomitants of poverty, yet one of his families is not a poor one.

In Asia the great mass of urban literature is dominated by other disciplines in much the same way as it is in Latin America. However, scrutiny of the anthropologically relevant items in it will broaden our perspective on our central topic.

There is Ronald Dore's study of Tokyo which combines the fruits of intimate acquaintance with a particular neighborhood with the cautious but constructive use of the ample census data which are available. Kinship, religion, and occupational patterns are described in great and vivid detail, and the same precision is used in an application of the scale concept within the city which puts most others to shame. The author's treatment of data would be acceptable to most anthropologists, and his findings certainly are of the utmost anthropological interest, yet he is not an anthropologist, and his book is, I believe, unmatched by any comparable work by an anthropologist.

While important anthropological research has been done in Indonesia, most of it is not specifically concerned with the city. An exception is Edward M. Bruner's study of the retention of ethnic identity patterns, reinforced by the maintenance of close social ties, among certain migrants to the city. This is a recurrent observation in studies all the way from Indonesia to the Middle East and its cultural extension in North Africa. In fact, the stereotype of the Arab city is of a honeycomb of smaller cells or subcommunities the origin of most of which was in the cohesiveness of newly arrived migrants. While most of these case materials are not the work of anthropologists, the situations are of the sort in which anthropologists feel at home as researchers.

Urban India has the beginnings of an anthropologically relevant literature. The "great tradition" concept is, for example, an attempt to



comprehend an assemblage of values and traditions which have been mainly carried by certain city dwellers. However, much of the Indian literature seems to be the result of uncritical applications of American urban sociology. Not infrequently, we find that the typical urban family is assumed to be organized as the Chicago stereotype would have it, and we suspect that cases are then found to fit the stereotype. Demographic and economic statistics, useful to the anthropologist when they are available, as they are in India, are frequently overanalyzed in India as they are in the United States. Also similar to the United States is the problem created by the fact that the political units in terms of which these figures are usually presented often cross-cut or overlap the actually significant communities in which people live.

I have already mentioned the generally accepted conception of the Arab city of the Middle East. It is related in part to the adaptation of migrants to the city, on which recent studies have been made, mostly by sociologists. In the past ten years, the city of Beirut, Lebanon, has also been the subject of three studies all of which are anthropologically relevant, none of which is by an anthropologist. One is a sample census concerning economic conditions of families, household composition, frequency of village ties, marriage patterns, etc. Another is a study of sexual practices with special reference to fertility differences among different religious groups. The third is a study of child rearing practices. Beirut has not been directly studied by anthropologists, yet anthropologically relevant studies of it have been made by members of other disciplines.

In terms of the preferences of anthropologists, there is room for much improvement in the information which we have on Asian cities. Yet it sometimes seems as if non-anthropologists were monopolizing the study of those aspects of culture in which anthropology in general has made a particularly heavy investment.

Is the urban environment too complicated for the anthropologist to cope with? Obviously, he can become acquainted with a far smaller fraction of the population of a city than of a small village, but he can still have in the city a research experience of the "total immersion" sort, and he will of course gather all the useful information he can find about the city in general so that he can as accurately as possible place his own immediate findings in perspective. If he feels few qualms about generalizing on an entire society viewed at a distance or from the side-lines, should he not have fewer qualms about generalizing on a single city viewed from close range?

There are no theoretical or methodological tenets of the discipline which keep the anthropologist outside the city gates. Yet there, for the most part, he is, while others are doing an increasingly large amount of his business inside. Why? One explanation is the possibility that anthropology as a profession tends to attract individuals who by temperament

are inspired to live among and study people about whom no one else cares, at least not enough to undergo the inconveniences which the anthropologist often undergoes in getting his material. Such people are not so easy to find in cities, although they are there, for cities in most parts of the world are the focus of great interest on the part of many specialists. Where we do encounter anthropologists at work in cities, the subjects of their studies are apt to be those about whom no one else cares.

Consequently, one form which an expanding urban anthropology might assume could be more and more studies of deviant or obscure, culturally specialized, groups within the city. I believe that such a development, though it would doubtless yield "interesting" results, would not help anthropology either to sharpen its own concepts or to contribute to a more accurate general understanding of the nature and problems of urban life. Make no mistake about it, anthropology is being looked to for what it may have to offer in this regard, and at the moment we will have to admit that we are largely to be found wanting. Those anthropologists who feel it professionally embarrassing to be found wanting in an area where they could indeed make valuable contributions, might consider what follows as a starting point from which to begin to plan for a future urban anthropology.

Unless and until a general behavioral science is evolved, in which the identities of the present separate sciences are blurred, anthropology *per se* will continue to attract persons with certain temperamental sets. I have already mentioned one which I consider to be of only limited value as far as urban anthropology goes. But there are two more which can be strengths, especially in urban research, if we are willing to modify or correct some of the inclinations which are inherent in them. First, the anthropologist is a visualizer, and second, he is a participator. If not consciously guided, these inclinations can lead, and often have led, anthropologists into reaching some questionable conclusions. Yet they also can lead, and have led, anthropologists to make some of their most valuable contributions. Let us consider these two matters in somewhat more detail.

The anthropologist likes to gather his material so that he can portray to others the reality which he has experienced and studied. For this he needs some sense of completeness or pattern, and one of his weaknesses is that if he does not readily find this in the external situation, he may inadvertently find it in his own fertile mind. Much of his pedantic, but none too clear, talk about holism, functional context, and model formation derives from this inclination and his semi-conscious struggles with it. It is also what accounts for his readiness to generalize from a small-scale situation to what he "intuits" to be patterns of a culture as a whole, without bothering with intermediate steps of testing. It further accounts for the fact that anthropologists are often irritated by sociological find-

ings not so much because they are "quantified," but because they are abstracted so far from the behavioral context and from situations that can be visualized. The process of random sampling tends to accentuate this abstraction, as does the superficial character of behavioral information which is presented in terms of large numbers of items of limited scope. The anthropologist's inclination to visualize and to portray is lacking in most of the other specialists on the city except to some degree the urban geographer and the planner. Here he has some competition, and a division of labor will need to be worked out, but if the anthropologist brings into play his strength as a participator, he will make contributions of his own which balance the technical skills of the others.

City studies, then, generally lack vivid and discerning descriptions of the urban environment as such. This is a vacuum which needs to be filled, and the anthropologist is well suited to do so. Journalists and novelists have the skill to do it too, but the former frequently have ulterior motives which lead to conscious distortions, while the latter are under no obligation (as the anthropologist is) to differentiate their own projections from objective reality. These are two more sources of competition which the anthropologist can meet if he does not simply try to copy his competitors, but, instead, to exercise his own discipline in a medium parallel to theirs.

Anthropologists working in most cities will probably find preexisting bodies of descriptive and analytic material which they can work into their own portrayals or use in connection with intensive depth studies. They will have to decide clearly what aspects of the environment need their special attention in view of these other contributions. In this respect the experience which I had in the city of Tripoli, Lebanon, in 1962, was different from what is likely to be encountered by anthropologists in many other cities. Though it has a population of about 180,000, Tripoli is very compact, its built-up area being about one square mile. Consequently, I could and did walk all over it, making observations of seasonal and diurnal variations in the congregation, ebb and flow of people, among other aspects of the living environment. (Incidentally, I have no intention of splitting hairs over whether Tripoli is still "sacred" or is "secularizing" as a result of culture change. While there are conspicuous differences in public behavior during Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting, in contrast to other months, there is no discernible relationship whatsoever between the five daily calls to prayer, which are electrically amplified from the city's 24 mosques, and simultaneous patterns of public behavior.)

Observations of this sort an anthropologist would probably make anyway. However, I also had to find information which in many other cities would very likely have already been assembled, analyzed and made available by various other specialists. Population and school figures; the

number, location and kind of public institutions and voluntary associations; the workings of the municipal government and the religious and secular courts; business and industrial institutions and changes; maps and patterns of the city's growth. The holistic, visualizing anthropologist needs to have all this kind of information, also. In Tripoli, I had to discover, in the first place, what kind of information on these subjects existed and then gather what there was of it together. While these experiences gave me an acute and concrete awareness of the specific complexities of the community, they of course required much time which would otherwise be spent by an anthropologist on other matters. This was all, by necessity, in the jack-of-all-trades anthropological tradition, but the exercise of this tradition in many cities, where geographers, economists, political scientists, planners, and others have already been at work, might be an unnecessary expenditure of time and effort. In any case, each urban anthropologist should know how to decide whether or not it would be necessary.

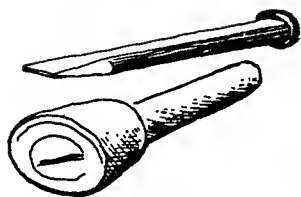
The inclination to visualize is one of the sources of the anthropologists's tendency to over-generalize, sometimes so vividly and convincingly that he eventually accepts his own general portrayals as established facts rather than as what they, at best, actually are, hypotheses. I have already mentioned cases in which preconceptions of certain cultural patterns are in effect assumed to be established facts, and I have suggested that the nature of cities is such that one is likely to be able to find in them by chance examples of anything one is looking for. The visualizer is sorely tempted to take this tack and anthropologists have often succumbed. Urban anthropologists must resist the temptation, even if it means tempering the vividness of their portrayals, for otherwise they are likely to complicate, rather than simplify, the problems of urban research.

The anthropologist's tendency toward over-generalization is also rooted in his inclination to be a participator. The fruits of this inclination are the depth and subtlety of his findings and these in turn are the basis of the "cultural insights" for which he has been appreciated. It is easy for many of us to jump to the conclusion that our detailed findings and our sophisticated interpretations of them must be as true for a large population as they are for the very small group from which we usually actually derive them. Urban research, in our own western industrial culture as well as elsewhere, badly needs the contributions of the anthropologist as participator. But at the same time, certain characteristics of the city which become clear when we visualize it as a whole, should force the anthropologist to recognize that he may not validly make such complex assumptions from such limited foundations. This was, at least, my experience in Tripoli. My primary object there was to discover if there were any important differences in various social patterns and at-

titudes between those Tripolitans who had no village and those who did. I soon discovered that what might be considered an "urbanite-migrant" difference might equally well be interpreted as being due to differences in both social class and religion. In other words, I soon discovered several sub-societies in Tripoli. My primary relationships were in one of them, but I was able to discover that informants in one really knew very little about any of the others. Ideally, in such a situation, I should have immersed myself in each segment in turn. In practice, this would probably be impossible, for it would take years and it would alienate me from each segment in turn. I have information on each of the segments, but it varies in nature and derivation, so that it will be my responsibility explicitly not to make equally general statements on all relevant subjects about the city as a whole.

Anthropologists working in other cities are very likely to encounter comparable situations and problems. If they are to make the best of their opportunities, they must broaden their scope of operations by means of imaginative yet disciplined uses of questionnaires and surveys where they are feasible. Such anthropologists must learn to do their own work on this. They cannot rely on sociologists to do it for them. For best anthropological results, the use of questionnaires and surveys should be interwoven with research by "total immersion," not merely done "parallel" to it, for there must be genuine transfer of information between the two. This kind of interweaving is unlikely to appeal to most sociologists who appear to prefer to remain detached from the people whom they study. Those anthropologists who undertake this venture will discover, as has been suggested earlier, that they will have to sharpen their consciousness of precisely what kinds of information they want to obtain, in order to decide how best to obtain it. In defining their immediate goals more sharply, they may find that they must also sharpen their elemental concepts, such as interaction, function, scale, values, structure, pattern, and so on, concepts which we all know are fuzzy and ambiguous but which we persist in employing as if they were not. Anthropologists can make important contributions to urban studies, and it is to be hoped that in the process they can make important contributions to the strengthening of their own discipline as a science.

## 34 *An Anthropologist Looks at Technical Assistance*



Charles J. Erasmus

*"UNDERDEVELOPED NATIONS" IS A COMMON JOURNALISTIC PHRASE THAT SUGGESTS countries which, while not primitive by the standards of anthropology, lack the kinds of technological development and general organization that characterize the modern industrial state. Without raising the vexing question of ethnocentrism, it may be agreed that an increase in the food supply and a reduction of the death rate are regarded as good in all known cultures. It will be further agreed that there are various means whereby such ends can be effected, provided that the required knowledge and machinery are made available. But there is more to it than this. Even if offers of technical assistance and medical aid are unencumbered with economic, military or ideological baggage, there is a problem to be met in the reaction of the "underdeveloped" society to the innovation and its mode of introduction. Here is the reaction of an anthropologist to technical assistance programs.*

This paper is concerned with conscious attempts to direct or to accelerate culture change, and is based largely on personal observations in several Latin American countries. It does not pertain specifically to

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the work of any one agency or to technical assistance programs directed only by agencies and governments foreign to the countries concerned. Many if not most of the examples used are drawn from cases where local governments have attempted to introduce change within their own countries. The purpose of the author is to synthesize these observations into a discussion of the patterns of resistance and acceptance demonstrated by the peoples of "underdeveloped" areas in the face of directed attempts to change their ways and to point out the implications of these patterns for the successful and economical operation of technical assistance programs.

### *Empiricism*

Introduced changes that bear clear and immediate proof of their effectiveness and desirability usually achieve a more rapid and widespread acceptance than changes of long-term benefit or changes in which the relationship between the new technic and its purported results is not easily grasped on the basis of casual observation. In agriculture, for example, the introduction of improved plant varieties (higher yielding or more disease-resistant) which result in a greater profit to the farmer has repeatedly resulted in spectacular success stories in many of the Latin American countries, and with a variety of cash crops. A foreign agency in one country developed an improved hybrid corn through local genetic selection. The first year that samples were distributed to farmers, the yield was so much higher than normal that the agency was deluged with requests for seed at the next planting time. In fact, the demand was so great that private enterprise quickly became interested in taking over the job of seed multiplication. In contrast, attempts to introduce soil conservation practices frequently encounter considerable difficulty. Practices that do not bear clear and demonstrable proof of their efficacy in a short period of time usually do not diffuse well on their own, with the result that their diffusion may often be no greater than the range of the agronomist's personal contacts.

The spectacular nature of certain introduced agricultural practices may vary considerably, however, with local environmental conditions. In arid badlands, as those found in some parts of Arizona, for example, where rainfall is confined to one brief season in the form of intense downpours, soil conservation practices may demonstrate remarkable benefits within a very short period. Dobyns shows us how eagerly such practices may be accepted under these conditions, in his case study of a conservation experiment among Papago Indians.

In the tropical lowlands of one Andean country, improved varieties of mosaic-resistant sugar cane have all but replaced the "criollo" varieties since their introduction some ten years ago. The newer varieties demon-

strated their usefulness so successfully in the form of higher yields and greater profits that they diffused from one farm to another with a minimum of extension support and promotion. In only two or three small valleys have the older criollo varieties persisted and in these cases because mosaic disease was never a problem, apparently as a result of certain prevailing dry winds. Here the farmers see no advantage to the newer varieties and prefer their criollo in the belief that it is easier to refine.

In public health programs, spectacular curative measures seem to take precedence over preventive ones in the rapidity with which they are accepted. Yaws campaigns carried on by the Institute of Inter-American Affairs, in collaboration with the governments of Colombia and Ecuador, have quickly and successfully overcome the initial resistance of the coastal Negro groups, among which the disease is endemic, and these campaigns are profoundly altering the folk beliefs and the fatalistic attitude formerly surrounding this disease. Even native curers now admit that modern medicine is more effective in the treatment of yaws than their own herbal and magical treatments. In the case of preventive medicine, however, the story in most countries is quite different. For example, the symptoms of intestinal infection in a young child may be diagnosed as "evil eye" by rural populations. In order for these people to be convinced that boiling their polluted drinking water will prevent the symptoms we attribute to intestinal infection, they must be able to observe some measurable decrease in the incidence of the symptoms as a result of the preventive technic. Owing to the conditions under which they live and their failure to understand the reasons behind the new device, intestinal infection may take place through other media, and consequently no relationship between the two is empirically established.

In the case of crops, naturalistic explanations are usually and understandably given to insect plagues while ailments due to microorganisms are sometimes attributed to supernatural causes for which magical preventive measures may be employed. However, when a commercial fungicide, which effectively protects one man's crop against the supernatural maladies that afflict his neighbor's, is introduced into a rural farming area, an empirically measurable relationship is established between the preventive device and the malady. Even though the farmers may not fully accept and understand the modern explanation nor completely abandon their former beliefs, they quickly adopt the fungicide (if they can afford it).

From these examples we begin to see that the people of the so-called underdeveloped areas do not reason very differently from those of areas considered more advanced. Unaccustomed or unable to read, they lack the one great avenue by which more sophisticated populations



avail themselves of a broader range of experience (including laboratory and statistical analyses) than would be possible if they were limited to the range of their own casual observations. The reasoning processes of both groups, however, are largely empirical and rest primarily on a frequency interpretation of events. Thus, in the case of a preventive measure for plant diseases or a remedial campaign for an easily distinguishable endemic disease such as yaws, the great number of individual cases plus conditions involving fewer variables permits a frequency interpretation in their favor within the limits of casual observation, whereas conditions involving a preventive measure for intestinal infections in a family of two or three children may not. Therefore, where a new practice can demonstrate its relationship to the improvements in such a fashion that a frequency interpretation is possible within the limits of casual observation, it has a much greater chance for rapid acceptance among the populations of underdeveloped areas.

Very often the nature of an innovation will depend upon proper follow-through by the innovator. In most of Latin America, new technics must be adapted to conditions on which few reliable data are available. Under such circumstances, an unknown factor, which would have been known and allowed for in the United States, will upset the results in such a way that the new practice fails to make what might have been a spectacular demonstration. In one country, a U.S. technician who was attempting to introduce the practice of broad-base terracing had no data available regarding maximum rainfall and soil conditions to guide him in calculating slope and channel capacity. By diligently checking his first experimental terraces under rainfall conditions, he corrected all errors before any damages might occur. As a result of this careful follow-through and sense of obligation to the farmers, not a single terrace failed when the area was later subjected to a heavy rain of flood proportions. In fact, the erosive action of the storm on adjoining non-terraced fields was such as to make the terracing demonstrations more valuable.

### *Need*

The needs felt by the people, as distinguished from those felt by the innovators, constitute one of the most important factors pertaining to the acceptability of an innovation in any particular case. If the people fail to feel or to recognize the need for an innovation, it may prove impossible to introduce it on a voluntary basis.

Several of these examples, pertaining to the introduction of new agricultural practices, involved not only the factor of their empirical verification at the level of casual observation but also appealed to a profit motive. An improved crop variety, which results in a higher yield or a

greater margin of profit, appeals to the profit motivation and the desire for greater purchasing power when the improved variety is a cash crop. When it is not a cash crop, the story may be different. From a study by Apodaca of the introduction of hybrid corn into a community of Spanish American farmers in New Mexico, we can see how motives other than those of greater profit may affect the outcome when the crop to be improved is not being grown for market. Within two years after the introduction of the hybrid, three-fourths of the community had adopted it. But after four years, all but three farmers had reverted to planting their original variety. The hybrid had doubled production per acre; the farmers had met with no technical difficulties in planting it, and the seed were readily obtainable. However, the corn was raised by the community only for its own consumption. As these people eat their corn largely in the form of tortillas (unleavened corn cakes), an important mainstay in their diet, and since the new hybrid did not yield tortillas of the same color, texture, and taste as their own corn, they reverted to their older variety. These reasons were more important to them than was the quantity produced. Apodaca notes the fact, however, that the hybrid was dropped with considerable reluctance by the farmers because of its much greater yield. They had empirically verified the fact that the hybrid was an improvement over the old in one sense, but not in the prime sense which pertained to their particular needs and values. This illustrates what can happen when an improvement that would normally have high appeal under cash-cropping conditions is introduced into a subsistence-oriented cropping pattern.

Let us now turn to examples where subsistence-oriented agricultural improvements are introduced into a money economy. Several years ago the ministry of agriculture in a South American republic sponsored a program to introduce the planting of soybeans in many rural areas. Today, the only place where this crop is planted on any scale is near a city where it is manufactured into vegetable oil. The object of this program was to induce the rural population to improve their diet. Soybeans, considered more nutritious, were to be produced solely for family consumption. The farmers not only found the new food distasteful but discovered that no one cared to buy it, and the movement quickly collapsed. In this case the appeal was made to a better health rather than a greater profit motive, but for the farmers the improvement was not empirically verifiable. Symptoms of malnutrition are often ascribed by the folk to supernatural and other causes which bear little or no resemblance to the medical explanations of the innovators. Therefore, in such cases no feeling of need for a new practice may arise to offset the disagreeableness of changing long-established food habits.

In numerous countries attempts have been made to induce rural populations to cultivate vegetable gardens for home consumption. In all

cases observed this, too, usually fails after the program has terminated, if the farmer has found no market for the new product in the meantime. Vegetable crops generally enter an area close to cities and towns, or along reliable communication routes leading to them, where the market is greater. Once farmers grow vegetable crops for profit, they invariably consume some. In one Latin American mestizo community where a health program had enjoyed some degree of success in introducing family vegetable gardens, several farmers said that the best way to pacify government programs was to go along with them and do as one was told; eventually the program would terminate, and then they would abandon the nuisance of vegetable gardens without creating any disturbance.

In another Latin American republic, a government-sponsored agency, designed to look after the welfare of farmers growing a cash export crop of importance to the national economy, instituted a program of aiding farmers to build new homes and improve farm structures that were necessary for properly processing the crop. The agency found that it received many more requests for the processing structures than for the homes, although the cost of both types of units was being borne largely by the agency. The farmers were required to pay a small percentage of the total construction costs, and a majority of them preferred to invest in the labor-saving devices. Frequently the field men of the program scolded the farmers for thinking only of their own convenience and never of the cramped and unsanitary quarters of their families. Again we find an example where the needs felt by the people were not entirely in accord with those felt by the innovators. Farmers accustomed to living under housing conditions which the innovators considered undesirable did not necessarily share this view. The processing structures, however, were already known to the farmers who were aware of their labor-saving advantages. The theory underlying the housing program was that more sanitary living conditions would result in more able-bodied farmers and in higher production. But a majority of the new houses rapidly returned to the same state as those they had replaced, a further indication that the needs felt by the innovators were not generally perceived by the farmers. New houses built on farms located along main highways or near population centers showed better maintenance than those that had to be reached by mule-back. Apparently, greater contact with external influences and the cultural environment of the innovators created a sense of need similar to that felt by the innovators.

Let us turn next to an instance of rapid change independent of any superimposed direction. Near two large cities along a semitropical coast, dairy farming recently has come into greater prominence because of the increasing market for milk. Large and poorly managed haciendas, for-

merly devoted to the pasturing of beef cattle, are breaking up into smaller and more efficiently operated dairy farms. The dairy farmers on their own initiative have imported improved dairy strains and have adopted improved feeding practices and silage. Some farmers have learned to keep daily records of the milk production of each cow, and on the basis of these records to practice selective breeding of their best producers. These dairymen are sensitive to new technics and knowledge. The local economy already has created an urgent need for new ideas, with the added promise of a high degree of acceptance. Diffusion of ideas from the most advanced to the least advanced farms is proceeding at a rapid rate.

We can see that when the objective of technical assistance is to increase production in an underdeveloped area, it is easier to realize among people who participate in a money economy. Rural people who are cash-cropping for national or international markets frequently tend to specialize. More attention is usually given to a particular crop, such as coffee, sugar cane, wheat, or potatoes. The local group often forfeits a great deal of its self-sufficiency in the process of specialization and consequently grows more accustomed to purchasing specialized products of other areas. An increasing tendency to purchase products external to the area is in turn usually accompanied by an increase in the number of new products and ideas entering the area, and the number of new needs thereby created. This type of situation seems to be more conducive and sensitive to change. Needs created by the process of specialization and the desire for increased production and profit actually seem the easiest for technicians from another culture or subculture to meet. The solution is often largely technical, fewer cultural barriers to a common understanding are presented, and the perception and feeling of needs are more easily shared by the innovators and the people.

However, when change is being attempted in a field not directly related to increased production in a money economy, in other words not directly in terms of profits, the difficulties increase. In the field of public health, for example, the innovator may consider it highly desirable to introduce basic disease prevention measures into an underdeveloped area. But the folk still subscribed to an age-old system of beliefs about the cause, prevention, and treatment of disease, a system so different that the preventive measures of the innovator were meaningless. Lacking an understanding of the modern concepts of the etiology of disease and consequently the reasons for modern methods of prevention, they may feel no need to adopt the prescribed changes. Thus, despite the fact that they feel a general need for assistance in combating the ailments common among them, they may fail to perceive the need for the specific measures proposed and may actively resist them.

## *Cooperation*

Until now this paper has purposely been limited to examples of changes whose acceptance and diffusion are largely an individual matter. As has been seen in the case of spectacular innovations such as improved plant varieties, this type of change frequently spreads with phenomenal rapidity from one individual to another with very little outside stimulus. However, some changes may require group or community adoption, a circumstance that can greatly increase the operational difficulties of introducing them. Not only must the need for the change or changes be perceived by the entire group or a large majority simultaneously, but the members of the group must cooperate for the given end.

Holmberg provides us with an excellent example of an assistance project which depended upon collective acceptance and which failed even though it was concerned with a need already felt by the people. In a community in the Viru Valley of Peru, villagers had petitioned the Peruvian government for aid in obtaining well water to supplement their river supply during periods of shortage in the dry season. A permanent and reliable water supply was important to these people for household and for irrigation and production needs. Although a well was successfully dug, the entire project failed because the technicians did not consult with leaders of local opinion or seek to involve the people. Antagonisms based on local social and political conditions became so great that it was necessary to withdraw the project.

Throughout one Andean country an attempt was made to establish farmer committees, by means of which it was planned to bring about agricultural improvements. In only one small mountain sector did the movement have success, and here only among farmers who until a few years before had been living in indigenous communities. Accustomed to a measure of independent local government in the past, they were organized with very little effort. Obviously, then, the failure of this program must have been due in part to the organizing technics, for the few successful cases were the result of highly favorable local circumstances.

It would seem that in many parts of Latin America there is a tendency to consider rural populations as more cooperative than they really are, or at least to take their cooperation for granted. However, in Latin America today many of the age-old customs promoting cohesion and cooperation in rural society are being or have been replaced by social relationships of a more impersonal and individualistic nature. Such replaced customs would include the mutual aid and assistance patterns involved, for example, in reciprocal farm labor and the ceremonial kinship obligations of godparenthood. Apparently the economic aspects of such mutual assistance customs were functional in a subsistence-oriented

rural economy, where the peasants cropped largely for family and local consumption. As roads increased the possibilities of marketing farm surpluses over larger areas, farmers began to specialize and came to be more dependent on other regions and countries for marketing their products and for the food and goods no longer produced on their own farms. Thus, the interdependencies existing between members of the local group in daily contact were gradually superseded by national and international interdependencies between peoples who never met. When the economic interdependencies between members of the local group were superseded by larger and more impersonal ones, the cooperative functions of older customs were unnecessary. The rural peasantry became more individualistic and less dependent on their daily contacts.

Actually, it may be fairly argued that the rural populations of Latin America are becoming more competitive than collective. Perhaps one of the clearest illustrations of this may be found in 4-H club work. Results are usually better when the young people work separate plots in competition than when they work the same land together in such a way that they cannot compare their work. Similarly, when earnings of club members are pooled for the purchase of livestock or tools used in common, the results are usually poorer than when each individual has the right to the fruits of his own labor. In such instances we can see how the profit motive coincides with individualistic and competitive tendencies.

When a technical assistance project in a certain country attempted to contour level rice fields across ownership boundaries in order to facilitate irrigation flooding in a pilot area, it was faced with the problem of obtaining the permission and collaboration of all the small landowners within the area. However, the technicians neglected to unite the various landowners concerned, to explain the project to them, and to seek their cooperative support. The project was carried out as if it were a type of change which could be effected on an individual or family basis. One farmer was induced to permit the contouring, then another, and so on. Because of the severe land fragmentation problem, the owners of neighboring plots were not necessarily neighbors in so far as the residence patterns were concerned. Even when a farmer and several of the friends who lived near him were convinced of the benefits of contouring, their plots within the area were found to be widely separated. As planting time approached, the project officials felt obliged to rush the job through, and so began contouring the individual and widely separated plots as functionally separate units. As the work progressed, other landowners began signing up. Eventually, nearly all gave permission to contour their land and agreed to pay the costs. But the sequence of requests was such that practically all contouring had to be done within, rather than across, ownership boundaries. Inasmuch as nearly all the farmers

eventually collaborated, there is reason to believe that with the proper inducement they could have been encouraged to do so before the work began. As a result, one of the major objectives of the project, to contour according to the topography rather than ownership boundaries, was lost.

### *Inducement*

The problem of inducement, as we shall use the word here, refers to the task of overcoming popular resistance to a proposed change for any of the reasons discussed so far. Even in the case of new technics of traits which demonstrate their effectiveness in a spectacular fashion, there is still the initial problem of bringing them to the attention of the public. If the problem is one of introducing an improved plant variety, some farmer or farmers must be persuaded to try it. If these initial experiments result in a much greater yield, the new variety usually sells itself. Generally, farmers are suspicious of government authorities and prefer to let someone else try the new technic before they adopt it. If a well-known neighbor obtains satisfactory results, others will often rush to follow his example. Demonstration farms are not so readily copied, as the farmers are not sure what additional advantages beyond their own means may have biased the results. When a large brewery in a certain country found that the home production of barley was insufficient to supply its needs, it hired agronomists to stimulate production in new areas. The agronomists circulated through the highland regions, promised farmers a good price for barley, gave instructions for planting, and provided seed. The first year very few farmers in a given area tried the new plant on a very modest scale. However, by the third or fourth year, after all had been convinced that the agronomist would keep his word about the price and that the plant would give profitable yields, barley had become one of the important crops.

Where the advantages of a new technic or trait are long term in nature or difficult to demonstrate empirically, long-term methods of introduction through formal education might be considered. Extension work with adolescents frequently demonstrates that it is easier to instill new habits among individuals who do not have to unlearn old habits. Furthermore, young people usually find it easier to substitute the prestige of the specialist for the prestige of tradition. Even when introducing nonspectacular innovations on a long-term basis through formal educational procedures, it will usually be necessary to take popular beliefs and practices into account so that persons may perceive a relationship between the needs they feel and the remedies proposed. In Quito, Ecuador, tests were given to school children who had been receiving formal lectures in health education, including the use of visual aid technics for some two years. Results showed that the period of instruction

had made little or no impression. Whereas modern explanations of the etiology of disease and its prevention were now familiar to the children, they were largely related to modern disease terminologies that had no meaning to them. The symptoms of those diseases were still being classified according to a folk system which included such causes as fright, evil eye, malevolent air, and witchcraft. According to the school children, these folk illnesses could not be caused by modern etiologies, could not be prevented by modern means, and could not be cured by medical doctors. In collaboration with the educators, attempted changes in the methods of instruction were made so as to allow the children to discuss their folk beliefs freely in class. During the discussions the educators attempted to show the children, without deriding their beliefs, that the symptoms they ascribed to fright, evil eye, and the like were the symptoms of the very diseases that the educators had been talking about for the past two years. They also tried to disassociate folk symptoms from folk etiologies and practices and to link them to modern methods of treatment and prevention. Retesting after the lectures gave very different results. Written tests, of course, do not necessarily indicate a change of habits, but these certainly indicated that for the first time the children were cognizant of a relationship between the measures and explanations of the educators and their own maladies. This illustrates the necessity of thoroughly understanding the local culture of a people, in cases where it is difficult for them to perceive the needs felt by the technicians under the ordinary limitations of casual empiricism. Ironically enough, salesmen for patent medicine concerns frequently give very careful consideration to folk beliefs in order to adapt the advertising of their products to the local concepts of disease.

In some cases people can be induced to accept new technics and changes, which they find difficult to accept, by linking them or making them conditional to other changes or services more desirable to them. For example, in anticipation of an irrigation project that they know will materially benefit them, farmers may be more willing to satisfy government wishes concerning secondary improvements which they would ordinarily resist. In the example of the contour leveling of rice fields, it seems very possible that one of the principal mistakes of the program was in failing to obtain commitments by the farmers for the leveling before the irrigation project was completed. As the farmers had already been provided with irrigation water, the inducement value of the irrigation project had been lost.

Similarly, where public health centers give attention to curative as well as preventive measures, their rapport with the public as well as their influence in implementing changes in disease prevention habits is noticeably greater. At a charity maternity hospital in Quito it was found that new practices, in conflict with popular beliefs—but with which mothers



had to conform in order to receive treatment at the hospital—were found to be having an important and permanent influence in altering their beliefs. In agriculture, the distribution of seeds and tools at cost may offer a decisive inducement to adopt recommended new cultivation practices. Where farmers can see no need for a program objective, it may be possible to alter the emphasis of the objective so as to enhance its appeal. In one Haitian valley, agronomists were able to effect measures of soil conservation by appealing to a local interest in coffee planting and by helping the farmers to start seed beds of coffee and shade trees for transplanting to hillside plots.

Where joint and cooperative action on the part of a community is necessary for the success of a project, considerable attention must be given to involving the people in the activity at an early stage. Whenever possible, the community should be made to feel that it has participated in the planning of the program. When cooperative programs are simply dropped upon the peoples of underdeveloped areas from some high planning echelon within the government, without any explanation and without any consideration for local opinions, the programs are very likely to fail either partially or totally.

In any technical assistance program one of the most important and most variable aspects of the problem of inducement involves the factor of person to person relationships. Much has been expounded on this subject, but the desideratum usually consists of little more than a consideration for the beliefs and customs of other peoples and a sincere attempt to understand them. Yet understanding can be no greater than allowed by the amount of personal contact and the ability to communicate.

A most effective foreign technician was a U.S. soils scientist attached to an agricultural research station in an Andean country. Good-natured and affable, he set out at once to make a friend of every member of the staff. Within his special field he led the local technicians to adopt several new research procedures, and saw several research projects of considerable importance well under way. Yet he never allowed his name to be attached to any project. He encouraged the local man most interested in the plan to initiate it, carry it through, and take the credit, while he played the part of a counsellor who continued to make suggestions but never gave an order. Three nights a week on his own time he held classes in English because he had discovered that many local technicians wanted to learn the language and that he made friends by helping them.

### *Complexity*

Frequently a change which seems desirable to the innovator may depend upon so many other secondary accompanying changes that its

introduction is difficult. Perishable food products, such as fresh vegetables and fish, are most easily exploited near markets where transportation to markets is reliable, inexpensive, and rapid, or where storage and processing facilities have been developed. Successful adoption of improved livestock may depend upon many correlative changes in husbandry practices. The latter in turn may depend upon the farmer's financial ability to provide better feed and care.

Failure to recognize the factor of complexity is one of the most serious problems in technical assistance work, partly because there are no established principles of diagnosis which can be applied to every case. Oftentimes the standard of living may be so low that the innovator's heart goes out to the evidences of suffering which seems unnecessary to him from his different cultural or subcultural viewpoint. Let us take for example country "X," whose density of population and infant mortality rate are among the highest in the world and whose per capita production is among the lowest. Is the first job of technical assistance to save lives and reduce the immediate evidences of human suffering, or is it to help the country itself to solve its health problems? The answer to this question depends on who provides the funds to build the public health centers, the water purification systems, and the public hospitals, and to educate the doctors and nurses. If the innovators provide these funds, the effort may involve much more than technical assistance; it may involve heavy financial assistance. As a result the population may increase more rapidly than ever, and with it all the existing economic and political stresses may be aggravated. However, if the innovators are concentrating on purely technical assistance, they may endeavor to help country "X" raise per capita production to a point where the country can pay for its own secondary improvements as it feels the need for them. In short, this would mean that technical assistance in country "X" might be aimed first at increasing productivity in agriculture and industry, while assigning the high infant mortality rate to a secondary position on its list of problems.

This extreme case is used simply as an example and does not mean that technical assistance in public health should be relegated to a secondary position in all countries desiring technical aid. In some countries productivity per capita is much bigger than in others and public health services for the population are already well established. In such cases, technical assistance for making these services more efficient is readily grasped and utilized and effects of the technical assistance are far more permanent and far reaching. U.S. public health technicians in one small country have played an important role in a malaria campaign to clean up a wide coastal zone that was formerly poorly exploited. Roads are now being cut through the jungles, exploitation of forest products is intensifying, and new settlers are entering the area to establish banana

and other plantations. Thus an entire nation has been benefited by these public health workers.

A price-support program for cotton was adopted in one country in order to induce greater home production for local textile industries. Within a period of three years agricultural changes in some areas have been almost revolutionary. On flat coastal plains to the east, land that was formerly yielding a very low rate of income per acre from an extensive type of beef-cattle ranching is rapidly changing into a zone of mechanized agriculture. Cotton has become white gold. Not only have many farmers rushed to exploit the new opportunities with mechanized farm equipment, but they have adopted new farming technics such as the use of fertilizers, insecticides, and crop dusting. This example is not used to justify price-support programs, but it does show how increased profits facilitate the adoption of new practices. They do not make such change automatic, however, for the same factors of need and empiricism still apply. Many farmers started planting cotton without heeding advice to use insecticides. They suffered serious crop damages the first year and saw the difference between their yields and those where insecticides were used, and then they adopted the practice the second year. Nor did cotton planting itself become generally adopted until a few enterprising farmers had made a handsome profit.

In situations of extreme land fragmentation where farmers must supplement their agricultural earnings by means of other endeavors, it is usually extremely difficult to initiate changes in farming practices. A higher yielding plant variety may be readily adopted, but many other innovations are difficult to introduce on uneconomical farm units. However, a desire to help impoverished farmers may lead administrators and technicians to attempt the introduction of improvements of a subsistence nature which require little or no capital expenditure. Programs may thereby develop with the purpose of introducing the household manufacture of family clothes, home gardening of all food necessities, home food-preservation practices, and inexpensive animal varieties such as rabbits as a source of meat for the family. All such devices are aimed at making farm families more self-sufficient and less specialized, a process contrary to the usual economic trends. Social welfare programs of this type seem to require more extension personnel and promotional activity than those designed to bring production-increasing technics to farmers who have the financial means to exploit them.

In one South American country where soil erosion has become extremely severe, U.S. soil conservation experts found that practically no remedial steps were being taken. In some areas, erosion had reached a point where only such drastic measures as complete reforestation would suffice. In others, the erosion problem was complicated by absentee land-ownership patterns or the exploitation of uneconomical farm units. How-

ever, by selecting an area of medium-sized mechanized farms personally administered by resident owners, the technicians were very successful in introducing many new soil conservation practices with a minimum of promotional activity. Farmers responded readily, were quick to recognize the benefits of the new measures, and found them easy to carry out at their level of operations. As a result of the impetus given to soil conservation by the successes in this area, the government created a special soil conservation division, within its ministry of agriculture, to attend to the erosion problems of the country as a whole.

In one sense, the areas of worst erosion in a country might be thought of as presenting the greatest need for correction, or the poorest farmers as the ones most in need of improved agricultural practices. Frequently, however, the persons most in need, in the judgment of the innovator, may be those who feel the need the least. For this reason it may often be more expedient and practical to work where the need, from the innovator's standpoint, is less acute but where there is greater willingness on the part of the people to make the change. The interest shown by the people themselves is more often a better index to their ability to successfully adopt a given change than the judgment of the innovator.

### *Economic Feasibility*

It would be quite logical to suppose that, given unlimited financial and human resources, a technical assistance program could effect any change desired. However, no technical assistance project has such unlimited funds; therefore, in any decision concerning the selection of projects, their feasibility with respect to budgetary limitations must be taken into account.

The kinds of innovations which would seem to be most inexpensive are those which require the least man-hours for strictly promotional purposes. Such innovations include those from which benefits are easily verifiable through casual observation, which are accepted and diffused on an individual basis, which meet a strong need already felt by the people (of particular appeal to a profit motive), and those which are in sequence with local development (not too complex). However, certain circumstances may justify considerable promotional activity. For example, in the case of projects requiring cooperative acceptance and action on the part of the people, the necessary groundwork must be done to involve them in the activities, or the time and money spent in the purely technological aspects may be lost. In such cases the two deciding factors are the amount of money being invested in the technological aspects, and the need which the people feel. In the case of an expensive irrigation project, about which the people are highly enthusiastic and for which their cooperation is requisite, the extension work necessary to iron out local social and operational

problems for the maximum success of the project should be considered a functional requirement. However, where considerable money is to be spent on a project in which the cooperation of the people is essential but for which they do not even feel a need, the project should be reexamined to see if it fits into the local sequence of development. If a project is very inexpensive but would require costly promotional work to secure the necessary cooperation from the people, the project should be reexamined to see if the ends really justify the means. It frequently happens, for example, that innovators like to initiate projects which require cooperative action from the people because they consider the encouraging of cooperation and community spirit as good and worthy projects in themselves.

The principal consideration in questions of economic feasibility is that of the needs felt by the people. When the people do not feel a need for the innovations proposed, promotional activity necessarily must be increased. Fortunately, actual situations are usually neither all negative nor all positive; differences exist in degree, and some persons within the same group or area are more receptive than others. In the case of soil conservation, for example, some farmers with better farm equipment, more capital, and a long-term outlook can be shown the benefits of soil conservation with relatively little difficulty, while neighbors with more modest resources continue to take a skeptical view. However, when a nucleus for change can be permanently established, even though the prospects of diffusing the change outside that nucleus in the immediate future are poor, the long-term gains may justify the modest beginning. Eventually others may come to recognize the benefits of an innovation at a time when conditions make it easier for them to adopt it or to appreciate its advantages. Thus, rather than spend time and money to promote the adoption of an innovation among people who cannot perceive its desirability, it may prove more expedient to establish it among strategically located nuclei or groups who can.

Another long-term alternative to costly promotional activity to establish a sense of need for new measures is that, already mentioned, of appealing to the younger members of the society through existing educational institutions. However, few well trained teachers and extension personnel may be available in some underdeveloped countries. Only highly productive nations can afford to maintain large numbers of competent teachers at salaries sufficiently attractive to make the long years of preparation worth the effort or the cost. Many persons overestimate the influence of formal education procedures by underestimating the technological and economic conditions which make them possible. Formal educational procedures become strictly promotional if they require large numbers of foreign personnel on free loan or large numbers of local personnel trained and maintained at the expense of foreign subsidy.

The most unfavorable conditions for introducing innovations are fre-

quently presented by such marginal peoples as Indian groups who more than anything else may simply wish to be left alone. The effort involved in introducing changes among them will be particularly great when their economy is still subsistence-oriented. Their conception of needs may be so different from that of the innovators that the two groups may find it very difficult to establish a common meeting ground for mutual understanding.

In general, the absorption of marginal peoples and cultures into the national sphere seems to follow most rapidly upon their further involvement in the national cash economy. In many cases it may prove more expedient to develop areas bordering on marginal groups in such a way as to draw them more closely into the national economy than to attempt to superimpose an extraneous need system directly upon them. While living in a Mayo Indian *comunidad* in southern Sonora, Mexico, during 1948, the writer had an opportunity to note the effects produced on an indigenous community by the rapid development of bordering areas. The development of irrigation and a more intensive machine agriculture to the north was creating more job opportunities and prosperity. Not only were members of the *comunidad* going north more frequently to work as seasonal agricultural labor, but they were returning with new ideas and wants. In fact, a growing nucleus was advocating division of the communal land as an incentive for wealthy farmers to extend irrigation into the area. Thus it was hoped that a more intensive and profitable type of agriculture would be possible for all.

A similar situation was encountered at the plantation of an American fruit company in a Latin American republic. The labor turnover the first year or two was extremely high, for individuals worked until pay day or worked only until they had earned enough to buy something they had specifically wanted. However, as new laborers kept replacing the old, some inevitably joined the nucleus of steady workers. These valued the permanent income, the clean and comfortable company housing, the superior company school for their children, and the company medical treatment. Within a few years the plantation had a permanent resident labor force. The company showed an interest in the upkeep and attractiveness of the workers' housing and helped them landscape gardens around their homes; thus a model community had been formed that was influencing the entire area. Workers in neighboring locally managed plantations were beginning to demand the same treatment, as they perceived a need for it themselves.

Not everyone can be induced to share the values and needs of the innovators at once but, by working first with those who already share them, the changes may eventually have far-reaching results without the unnecessary expense of promotional methods. In short, action programs among those who already feel a need for an innovation would seem to be more

effective and less expensive in the long run than promotional programs for those who must first be inspired to feel the need.

One of the greatest weaknesses in most technical assistance programs is the failure to recognize the indispensable part played by research in increasing their economic feasibility. In this respect, government might conceivably learn from business. One writer on the subject of business management has said that any company that lacks an organized program of research will eventually find itself out of business. Two major forms of business research, market and engineering studies, might be paralleled by technical assistance agencies to their advantage. Market studies could be designed to get all the pertinent facts about the people to be changed, including their needs and wants, their ability to absorb a given innovation, and their previous reactions to similar programs in the past. Engineering studies might include research in any number of technical fields, as well as comparative research in the methods and results of other agencies in other parts of the world, and the continued self-evaluation by the agency of its own programs to perfect the least expensive and most effective means of realizing its objectives. However, in government assistance programs, research can probably be realized best through an organization pattern that recognizes the difference between staff and line functions. Government reporting is prone to be a line function originating with operations personnel, who execute it with a bias toward justifying the further existence of their programs. By avoiding the disclosure of mistakes in specific operations, short-term benefits may accrue which prevent the self-evaluation and self-correction necessary to avoid those seriously damaging setbacks that result from the accumulation of hidden errors.

35 The Right  
Not to Assimilate:  
The Case of  
the American Indian<sup>1</sup>



Alexander Lesser

NOT EVERYBODY SUBSCRIBES TO THE DOCTRINE OF CULTURAL RELATIVISM OR that rider to the doctrine which holds that different cultures are entitled to be different. More to the point, a lot of people who claim to support such a statement really do not and cannot take it seriously. Such people are theoretically willing for other cultures to be different from their own but they can't understand how people can "want to live that way." For example, it is obvious to most Americans that everybody really likes steak, that a glass of milk is good for you, that bugs are inedible. More seriously, it is widely believed that social and mental health requires a father-centered family; that capitalism is the most natural type of economic organization; and that industrialization is progress. Most serious of all is the discovery that some people who have long experience of our culture simply haven't bought it but have rejected it, not out of a spirit of revolt (as is true in some sectors of our own society) but simply because they never got to like it or feel its necessity.

There are actually quite a few such cases and the perceptive reader

<sup>1</sup> This paper was originally circulated as "Occasional Paper No. 3" of the Phelps-Stokes Fund.

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*may supply some of his own observation. Certainly an outstanding case is the one we ourselves surround, that of the American Indian so tellingly revealed in Professor Lesser's sharply insightful article.*

To a good many Americans, the American Indians are a "problem," and by no means a simple problem that can be easily solved. This rather common American feeling cannot be accounted for alone by the position of the Indians as a minority or by the disadvantages that go with it. In actual situations of discrimination, the public mood is clear and action prompt. Thus, in Pontiac, Michigan, in 1960, when a Winnebago veteran was denied burial in a cemetery "restricted to Caucasians," the people were indignant and interred him with public ceremony and military honors. This kind of Indian "problem" is unlikely to leave vague discomforts unresolved.

The sense that Indians are a special "problem" comes, I think, from their unique position rather than from their minority situation—their distinctive legal status in relation to the nation and their stubborn insistence on their Indian identity. Neither of these is clearly understood by the public, and the intrusion of either or both may so color a situation that public reaction is confused and uncertain. The recent situation in New York illustrates this. Edmund Wilson in *Apologies to the Iroquois* observed in Niagara Falls that "a good deal of sympathy . . . for the fight of the Tuscaroras" against New York Power Authority plans to take Tuscarora lands for a hydroelectric project "turned into a kind of resentment" when the Indians, invoking tribal rights under treaties with the United States, seemed to be winning; non-Indians in the same predicament had no such legal argument against condemnation. This kind of situation may not evoke a definitive public reaction; it is more likely to generate uneasiness and leave behind it a sense of "problems" unresolved.

A resolution of this special Indian "problem" is unlikely unless the factors involved in the Indian situation are understood and unless the historical significance of the position of the Indians in the United States is realized.

## I

Americans not in direct contact with Indians may not even be aware of their existence most of the time, and the experience of rediscovery, when Indians make headlines, may itself be disturbing. Indians are a reminder of a past that troubles the American conscience. More than that, their existence as *Indians* unsettles the firm conviction that in this country, with its superior institutions, assimilation is proper and desirable and

in fact an inevitable, automatic process. Why, after centuries of contact with us, should Indians still feel so separate and aloof?

In 1961, the striking fact is that Indians are not only here with us to stay, in the sense of biological survival,<sup>2</sup> but that there are many thousands of Indians—in 29 of the 50 states—still essentially unassimilated. They have not experienced that identification of interests and outlook, that “interpenetration and fusion,” in which they would have acquired American “memories, sentiments, and attitudes” and come to share our “experiences and history” which the late Chicago sociologist Robert E. Park saw as the essence of assimilation.

Most unassimilated Indians live in Indian communities. There are many—in twenty-five states. Pueblo and Hopi communities of New Mexico and Arizona and the Navajos are perhaps best known. In the Southwest are also Apache communities, the Pima and the Papago and the Havasupai, among others. But Indian communities are found as well in other parts of the country. To mention a sample, there are the Eastern Cherokees of North Carolina; the Chippewas of Red Lake, Minnesota; the Menominis of Wisconsin; the Sauk and Fox of Iowa; the Hidatsa, Mandan, Arikara, and several divisions of Teton Sioux in the Dakotas; the Blackfeet and Cheyennes in Montana; the Klamaths in Oregon. Other states in which Indian groups survive include Oklahoma, California, Nebraska, Kansas, Wyoming, Idaho, and Washington. Americans recently became aware of two in New York, the Tuscaroras and the Senecas, when these Iroquois opposed state and federal plans to inundate Iroquois lands by construction of dams for power and flood control. Edmund Wilson, in memorializing these people in *Apologies to the Iroquois*, gives eloquent testimony to the viable group life of these and other Iroquois communities of New York.

In size, these communities range from the Navajos, the largest, with more than 70,000 members, to small communities like the Sauk and Fox of Iowa, who number a few hundred. In culture, there is great diversity, and Indians still tend to identify themselves first as Navajos, Sioux, or Cherokees, and secondarily as Indians.

Indian groups are of course only a handful of the tribes who originally peopled the country. But their endurance, with the deep sense of tradition and identity which many retain, is a remarkable phenomenon. They have survived the exterminations which depleted and destroyed In-

<sup>2</sup>The census shows a marked increase in Indians during recent generations and a rate of population growth more rapid than that of the country as a whole or of any other identifiable group. There are now between 400,000 and 500,000 Indians in the continental United States and Alaska, and, if the present rate of increase continues, descendants of the original Americans may be as numerous in another generation as their ancestors were in Columbus' day.

dian peoples of the Atlantic seaboard and of California; the forced evacuations which took many from their homes into alien country; and the concentration of tribal groups in restricted areas, stripped of their traditional land base. Most important of all, they have survived despite the generations of national effort to force assimilation upon them, for our dominant Indian policy from the beginning has been assimilation. Their existence today reflects the voluntary decision of their members, as citizens of the United States,<sup>3</sup> to maintain traditional group life, in many cases on the homelands of their ancestors—a decision which speaks strongly for the vitality of the Indian way and the values of Indian group life.

How “Indian” is life in these communities? Measured by externals, by clothes and housing, by use of non-Indian technology and gadgets, or by ways in which many now make a living, it may appear that the people of these communities have on the whole adopted our ways. The San Carlos Apaches of New Mexico, for example, raise some of the finest American livestock for market. The Red Lake Chippewas of Minnesota ship fish by refrigerated trucks for sale in Chicago. The Sauk and Fox of Iowa make a living by working for wages among their non-Indian neighbors. Indian life has not been standing still. The Indians have been making accommodations and adjustments to our society and economy from early times, and they continue to do so.

But modern studies of Indian communities show that adoption of the externals of American life is not neatly correlated with accompanying changes in basic Indian attitudes, mind, and personality. Feelings and attitudes, the life of the inner man, change more slowly than utilitarian features of comfort and convenience. Studies among the Cherokees of North Carolina, for example—considered one of the Five Civilized Tribes for more than a century—and among the Navajos of the Southwest reveal the same inner Indian feelings about the world and man’s place in nature, the same non-competitive attitudes, the same disinterest in the American drive for progress and change.

The changes these community Indians have made over time, taken all in all, seem selective. Some inner man resisted complete annihilation of self and identity and held fast to values and attitudes acquired in a mother’s arms and on a father’s knee and chose from us some things of use but not others. They chose principally what we call material culture and technology and little of our sentiments and values and our philosophy of life.

<sup>3</sup> By 1924, more than two-thirds of the Indians were citizens under treaties and agreements. In that year citizenship was confirmed by enactment for all Indians born in the country. Indians have full rights of citizenship, which include, of course, the right to complete freedom of movement anywhere. The time is past when Indian communities can be dismissed as “segregation” or as “concentration camps.”

## II

Indian non-assimilation in an America which has so largely assimilated many peoples from many lands is an anachronism only if we think of the Indians as merely one among many American minorities and if we look for the same process of cultural change and adjustment in them all. The others are immigrant minorities; with the exception of the Negroes, they came here voluntarily, and their coming, their choice of a new homeland, implies some commitment toward assimilation.

The Indian situation and Indian relations with the dominant culture in America are quite different. The Indians have roots deeply buried in the soil; their communities have a history in the land more ancient than that of the majority people. They can best be compared with European national minorities who became part of an alien country as a result of national expansion or, in North America, with the French-Canadians of Quebec who became part of an English country after 1763. In these cases, as among the Indian communities, the people are resistant to assimilation and try to maintain traditional ways and even traditional language.

What is true of those who remain at home in close association with their own ethnic community, however, is not true of those who may migrate and take up life elsewhere. Members of European national minorities may move into industrial cities or emigrate to America; French-Canadians of Quebec may migrate to western provinces of Canada; American Indians may leave their tribal communities for life in our towns and cities. As in the case of European immigration to the United States, Canada, or Latin America, the migration is a movement of individuals and families.

If they do not return home, these migrants are subject to assimilating influences of a different culture to a degree that their kinfolk at home are not, and they are more likely to be receptive to assimilation. The process takes time and usually takes place over generations. The original migrants achieve only partial assimilation; their children, especially when schooled entirely in the new environment, carry the process further; and in the third generation assimilation becomes virtually complete.

This kind of assimilation has taken place over the years among our Indians, as individuals or families have left their communities and in time severed their tribal connections. How many have left Indianism behind in this way we do not know, for it is difficult to keep an accurate count, but there have been many.

A confusion between this process of assimilation of migrants over a period of generations and that of the adaptive change and accommodation going on in Indian home communities may explain the confident pre-

dictions made on more than one occasion that this or that Indian community would become fully assimilated in some definite period of time. The stated period is often twenty-five years, approximately a generation. At the end of that time, however, contrary to predictions, the community is still there, as strong in numbers and as viable and unassimilated as ever. Some members may have left and chosen assimilation, but an increase of the population at home has usually more than made up for the loss. It has become increasingly probable that many of the communities that have endured are likely to be with us for a long and indefinite future unless radical or brutal measures are taken to disorganize and disperse them. We may have to come to terms with a people who seem determined to have a hand in shaping their own destiny.

Nor is the persistence of these Indian communities in an industrialized America a wholly exceptional fact in the modern world. Communities with strong commitments to traditional ways of life are known in industrialized European areas. For example, the Keurs, in *The Deeply Rooted*, describe a traditional Drents community in the Netherlands. More striking are studies in Wales and Cumberland, close to the heart of industrial England, the original home of the Industrial Revolution. Alwyn Rees, in *Life in a Welsh Countryside*, found country neighborhood patterns of life persisting in Wales in 1940 from a pre-industrial past and, in some ways, from a more remote pastoral and tribal past. W. M. Williams, in *Gosforth*, describes Cumberland ways in 1950 still unassimilated by industrial England, still persisting in traditional patterns hundreds of years old.

Such obstinate endurance, with its inner resistance to engulfment by dominant but alien traditions, can be understood, no doubt, as a reflection of the fundamental role of primary relationships—especially that of parents and children—in handing on basic attitudes, feelings, and patterns of interpersonal relations. But it is also a stubborn fact of vital importance in understanding the contemporary world of many peoples and many cultures, each of which may seek from the West ways to improve standards of life, but each of which may at the same time be determined to keep an identity and tradition of its own.

### III

The feeling that Indians are a special “problem” is not a reaction only to Indian non-assimilation. The unique legal status of Indians, when it obtrudes and reveals that Indians may have special rights other citizens do not have, is equally disturbing. It offends the American sense of fitness and equality, the feeling that there should be no special groups—none at a disadvantage and none that have advantages over others.

For it is true that the distinctive legal position of the Indians—their primary relation to the federal government—involves what may be called

“special rights.” The government, as trustee, protects Indian lands, and such trust-protected lands are exempt from state and local taxation.<sup>4</sup> The federal government provides services to Indians, including agricultural and soil conservation services and health and education services, that others receive principally through state and local agencies. And Indian communities have under federal law rights of community self-government and the right to organize tribal business corporations.

The federal status of Indian communities began in early times, and it has a long history. For more than a century after colonization, the balance of power was on the Indian side, and the colonists, seeking peaceful relations essential to the survival and expansion of settlement, dealt with the Indian tribes as they found them—autonomous and self-governing. They made treaties and agreements with individual tribes through tribal leaders.

This recognition of the autonomy of the separate Indian tribes became a principle of dealing with them as independent nations which the United States inherited from British colonial rule. Thus, Indian relations were external affairs of the United States—a matter for treaty-making by the nation and not by the states. We “bought the United States” from the Indians, to use a phrase of Felix Cohen’s, by treaties with individual Indian tribes, treaties which, as part of the bargain, guaranteed trust protection of remaining Indian lands and freedom from taxation on those lands. When the treaty-making period was ended by Congress in 1871, the Indians, as dependent groups within the nation, remained a federal responsibility and the provisions of treaties made before 1871 became continuing federal obligations to the Indians, the basis of most of the “special rights.”

The special status of Indians and their “special rights” not only are themselves annoying to us but seem related to that other needling fact about Indians: the aloof pride with which many have persisted in remaining Indian. For their status and rights set the Indians apart, a unique group of American citizens, and thus aid and abet them in keeping a separate identity. On the whole, however, they help those remain Indian who want to be Indian, who express their wish by clinging together in a community; those who want assimilation can and do leave the community and go their separate ways.

During the more than a century of this country’s commitment to a policy of assimilating and absorbing the Indians, the government has not been unaware of the role of Indian community life and the federal Indian tie in thwarting the assimilation process. In 1887, Congress saw Indian patterns of land tenure as the foundation of Indian community

<sup>4</sup> However, Indians pay all other taxes paid by other citizens, including real estate taxes on Indian-owned land not in trust status.

institutions and attacked them in the General Allotment Act. That act, by ending communal land tenure and making Indians individual property owners, was intended to break up tribal life and assimilate Indians as individuals; unhappily, when communities disintegrated under its pressures, the detribalized individuals who lost their lands became, not assimilated Americans, but paupers and public charges.<sup>5</sup> As recently as 1953, Congress proposed to terminate the federal Indian tie as rapidly as possible, including termination of trust protection and federal services to Indians. The intent was clear: immigrants do not become fully assimilated as tribal groups and neither would Indians. Although the termination program is at a standstill for the present, two large tribes, the Menominis of Wisconsin and the Klamaths of Oregon, are now going through the last stages of termination procedures enacted in 1954.

If it be admitted that the persistence of Indian communities is related to their federal status, and that Indian rejection of full assimilation is related to the fact that Indian communities survive, there still remains the question: Should the nation's Indian policy be committed to and directed toward assimilation?

For a brief period, while John Collier was Commissioner of Indian Affairs (1933-45), this question was courageously answered in the negative. The existence of Indian communities as a reality of the modern world was accepted and a program was designed, partly realized in legislation—the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934 and supplementary legislation—to provide Indian communities with the legal status and machinery and the economic resources and opportunities they required to continue their existence for as long a time as they chose. Tribal self-government and tribal business corporations under this program have already been mentioned; the program also included provisions for an adequate land base, financial credit, and adequate training and education.

The charge that this program was intended to halt Indian progress and keep Indians, like museum specimens, in their ancient unchanging ways, stems from a complete misunderstanding of its motivation or from die-hard assimilationism. The program was actually committed to more change and progress toward improved standards of Indian life than had ever been contemplated in the preceding century of Indian affairs.

<sup>5</sup> The act was in force 47 years. During the period, two-thirds of Indian-owned lands of 1887 were alienated from Indian ownership, principally as a result of the procedure of first individualizing land holdings and then removing them from trust status. Some tribes were not subject to allotment, especially tribes in the Southwest. Of the many who were subject to the program but opposed it, few wholly escaped; the Red Lake Chippewas of Minnesota are perhaps the outstanding case. Some of the disastrous effects of the allotment program were remedied in the Indian New Deal period that began in 1934. In 1960, one tribe, the Northern Cheyennes of Montana, was trying to promote a tribal "Fifty-Year Unallotment Program" to return all allotted lands still Indian-owned to tribal ownership.

How Indian, in the sense of old Indian ways of life, are the livestock corporations, the farming and husbandry co-operatives, the co-operative tribal stores, or the commercial credit that were essential parts of the Collier program? The program was in fact dedicated to constructive accommodation and adjustment of Indians to modern American life, but also to the idea—unpopular, perhaps, among most Americans—that a decision to become completely assimilated and give up Indian identity and community life was not for the nation or the government to make but for the Indians to make for themselves.

#### IV

Some Americans see assimilation, and ending Indian communities and special Indian status, as in the best interests of Indians. The legal forms which now safeguard the status of Indian communities are seen as restrictions or limitations of Indian activity and opportunity and not as marks of Indian freedom. The Indian rights of tax exemption on trust property are not ordinarily so characterized, of course; they are usually written off as peculiarities which set Indians apart from others, increasing social distance and the difficulties of intergroup relations. But such features of the trust situation as government control over the use and disposition of trust-protected Indian lands and other tribal assets are seen as hampering and restrictive, as undue paternalism and overprotection which increase Indian dependency and destroy Indian initiative.

Few would deny that overpaternalism has often impaired the administration of Indian affairs. The trustee relation is often ambiguous and difficult; abuse of power on the one hand or over-anxiety on the other both may have damaging effects.

The difficulty is compounded in Indian affairs because the federal government is in a trustee relation to both communities and individuals. The trust protection of individual property is an outgrowth of the federal trust relation to tribal property; tribal property may be individualized, but individual owners may hold restricted titles (in theory, being judged incompetent), rather than unrestricted titles in fee simple. This trust relation to individuals has all too often involved abuses or overprotection, and it may well be that the relation is more restrictive than liberating, especially if individuals have chosen the path of detribalization and assimilation. But it is the federal trust relation to Indian communities rather than individuals that is most germane in this discussion.

In the case of communities, it is doubtful that paternalistic abuses which have occurred are inherent in the federal trust relation. Tribal self-government, for example, since its organization under the IRA, has suffered on a good many occasions from unwarranted government interference. When Indians asked for clarification of their rights under new



tribal constitutions, superintendents were often too prone to interpret provisions in favor of their own authority and against that of the tribe. And when graft or corruption is alleged against tribal councils and administration, officials all too often have intervened so eagerly that Indians have had little opportunity to work out democratic processes for themselves. Federal trusteeship can be operated without such abuses.

Perhaps the more important question about the restrictive or liberating character of the protected status of Indian communities is what kind of freedom we are talking about. The freedom of Indians to become as non-Indian and assimilated as they wish cannot be the issue here. The Indians are citizens with the full rights of citizenship, and many have exercised their freedom to become completely Americanized. But there are many who want and need the freedom to be Indian within the framework of America. For them the existence of the community to which they belong is essential to that freedom, and some defined legal status of the community is essential to its continued existence.

The disappearance of our Indian communities by assimilation has a crucial finality that assimilation can never have for other American minorities. Irish, or German, or Scandinavian, or Italian immigrants who become assimilated can still look toward a homeland from which they came, a viable tradition and culture which dignifies their origins. For the Indian, the tribal community is the only carrier of his tradition; if it disintegrates and disappears, his tradition becomes a matter of history, and he loses part of his identity. We are coming to know the importance of this sense of identification with a viable tradition in the meaning of Israel for the American Jew, or of the emergence of free African nations for the American Negro.

There is a tendency for people in the United States to think that we may be coming of age as a people, that now we may be able to accept diversity in our midst without condescension, and that we may be ready to accept as sovereign equals the many peoples, of many races and creeds and cultures, who coexist with us in the complex modern world. Such a liberalism, however, is not yet the American mood in Indian affairs.

While we are unable to rise above assimilationism in our attitude to the Indians, the legal forms which now safeguard their community life and their right to be Indian may be essential. No doubt other forms could be developed by them within the framework of American law, such as, for example, corporate community life without a federal tie, but Indians are unwilling to risk such a change. They hold fast, in the assimilationist mood of America, to the historical status which protects them.

In other respects, however, the Indians are changing and ready for greater changes. Still greatly handicapped by their predominantly rural situation in an industrialized America, they seek technical assistance and

training if they can secure these without sacrificing the Indian status they have and want to keep.

Outstanding in the change going on among Indians is the sudden appearance in the last decade of a strong urge for advanced education. Less than two hundred Indians were in college in 1950. Yet by 1959 more than 4,300 were attending colleges and universities, and the number seems likely to continue to increase. This changed attitude toward education, which involves not only the young but their parents and families as well, implies other less obvious changes in Indian attitudes toward their life in America.

Higher education means, of course, that more Indian individuals may choose the path of non-tribal, assimilated life. But it also means that Indian community life will soon be in the hands of a generation of educated Indians. Some communities may choose to disband, with their members going their separate ways; others may want to carry on group life for an indefinite future period. In either case, the decision is likely to be made by informed, educated people, aware of their past and also of their possibilities in America.

Meanwhile, the best we can do, as Felix Cohen once put it, may be "to get out of the way" of the Indians, to stop hampering their efforts to work out their own destiny, and especially to stop trying to make them give up their Indian identity. In a world which may be moving toward greater internationalism, in which we hope that peoples, however diverse, will choose the way of democracy, we cannot avoid the responsibility for a democratic resolution of the American Indian situation. Our attitude toward the Indians, the stubbornest non-conformists among us, may be the touchstone of our tolerance of diversity anywhere.

# 36 *Applied Anthropology and the Development of a Science of Man*



Laura Thompson

THE ACCUMULATION OF KNOWLEDGE FOR ITS OWN SAKE IS PERMISSIBLE and even laudable in certain sociocultural systems including our own. This does not prevent some practitioners in otherwise pure research or instructional fields from trying to apply their knowledge to concrete problems. Anthropology, too, has its applied side. For many years it suffered a clouded reputation and much abuse. Now, however, some of those who previously might have opted for an ivory tower approach realize that failure to participate as fully as possible in the social process is, ironically, full-scale participation in that social process (see II:50). As Mao Tse-tung has noted, everything leans to one side (or the other), the seeming non-act of not rectifying a situation constitutes a positive act of supporting that situation to the extent that it is permitted to continue. This is not to say that all such acts do not have ethical consequences which require considerable thought, but rather that avoidance of such problems has its own comparable consequences.

Accepting the need for a "clinical" branch of anthropology, Dr. Thompson goes beyond to explore mutual relations between the theoretical and applied aspects of the discipline.

SOURCE: "Is Applied Anthropology Helping to Develop a Science of Man?", *Human Organization*, Vol. 24 (1965), pp. 277-287. Reprinted by permission of the author and the Society for Applied Anthropology.

Dr. Laura Thompson (Mrs. Sam Duker) (b. 1905) has taught anthropology for many years but is now an independent consultant in applied anthropology and research design. She has done fieldwork in a variety of settings, including different American Indian societies, Mexico, Fiji and Guam. Among her extensive publications are *Culture in Crisis* (1950) about the Hopi, *Toward a Science of Mankind* (1961), and *The Secret of Culture*, which is soon to be released.

### *Introduction*

In his review of Mühlmann's collection of theoretical essays, Honigsmann calls attention to the current peak of brilliance in cultural anthropology. We have but to pause a moment to note the high caliber and originality of much work by anthropologists today. This applies not only to cultural anthropology but to virtually all fields of the discipline: human genetics, linguistics, archaeology, ethnography, and psychiatric anthropology, for example. Applied anthropologists, working at a fast pace amid the complexities of the midcentury, may not fully appreciate the extent to which our specialty is involved in the current productive period.

This paper is concerned with one phase of recent developments in applied anthropology. I shall consider briefly whether applied anthropology is playing a role in helping to develop a science of man. I shall not discuss whether a science of man is emerging since this question has been treated at length elsewhere. Assuming that such a science is imminent, the question here is: What if any role is applied anthropology playing in the birth process?

Many anthropologists take the position that applied anthropology has little if anything to contribute to theoretical anthropology. As late as 1959 Kroeber wrote:

I consider the development of fundamental science, whether of human relations or of anything else, a different matter from the solution of pragmatic problems. The practical problems can no doubt be solved more wisely if there exists genuine science to draw on. But the science as science will not develop better or faster for having its pursuit mixed with problems of application.

Shortly before his death Clyde Kluckhohn told me that he found it virtually impossible to interest his best students in a career in applied anthropology. They simply did not regard this subdivision of the discipline as one worthy of their attention. Several very good government jobs in this field went begging, he said, because these students could not be persuaded to accept them.

In view of these facts and assumptions an attempt to clarify certain aspects of the role of applied anthropology in today's world would seem timely.

### *Applied Anthropology: Clinical Versus Engineering Types*

There is considerable agreement among social scientists that two contrasting schools of applied social science have emerged recently.

Gouldner calls these the engineering type and the clinical type. He finds these types represented not only among applied sociologists but also among applied anthropologists. In this paper I shall not discuss applied anthropology as a whole but only that subdivision of the discipline which falls within the category of clinical anthropology.

Clinical social scientists may be distinguished from the engineering type in terms of role. From this standpoint a clinical anthropologist, as the term is used here, interprets his role in relation to that of his client, whether the client be an administrator or a citizen group, as one of scrupulously refraining from the decision-making function and leaving that function to the client. The clinical anthropologist's role is seen as one of providing the client with decision-making tools, including relevant information concerning the probable consequences of alternate possible choices. Since this role requires that the clinician predict the probable behavior of the group under consideration from a long-range viewpoint under alternate pressures, including those implemented to induce change, the clinical anthropologist must understand the group in an explanatory way, including the interrelationships between all variable sets operating significantly in the group's situation relevant to the prediction problem.

By contrast, the role of the engineering anthropologist, from this viewpoint, involves formulating specific recommendations for his client regarding the implementation of specific policy objectives, or even regarding policy and other objectives as such. The engineering role may also involve controlling, guiding, and accelerating adaptive change. While these roles require the engineering anthropologist to be cognizant of the group's system of interpersonal relations, and even in certain cases of its ideology and economic resources, they do not prevent him from directly intervening in the lives of community members and from attempting directly to guide or change the pace of culture change processes in directions he or his client consider appropriate.

By the term clinical anthropology, in sum, I refer to projects in applied anthropology which attempt to investigate, by means of a scientific approach, whole human groups as organismic units in the context of their ongoing, constantly changing life situations, for purposes of prediction. The life situational approach of the clinical anthropologist forces him to experiment with a multilevel methodology reflecting the multidimensional nature of the real life situations he is trying to elucidate. I shall try to clarify the point further in the following pages.

### *Statement of the Thesis*

Since space is limited, the discussion will focus on five propositions regarding the successful practice of clinical anthropology. Although obviously no single point is unique to applied anthropology, my thesis is

that, considered as a whole, they reveal and illuminate the unique, positive role which clinical anthropology is currently playing in directly helping to develop a science of man.

1. The practice of professional applied anthropology forces the anthropologist to concentrate on dynamic, real life problematic situations rather than on academic or pure research problems.

2. The problematic situations with which applied anthropologists concern themselves relate primarily to human groups rather than to human individuals.

3. Such group problematic situations are usually critical ones with human lives and welfare at stake, in urgent need of resolution within relatively fixed limitations of time, space, and available resources. Hence the conscientious clinician is motivated to succeed in his endeavor over and above the challenge afforded by projects of a more orthodox, academic type.

4. Resolution of such problematic situations, translated into scientific problems, demands of the investigator demonstrable skills in forecasting probable changes and future trends in human group behavior under certain limiting conditions and potentialities. The development of such predictive skills depends not only on professional training and experience but also and crucially on the use of a mature scientific approach involving refinements in theory, method, and professional role.

5. Success in the practice of applied anthropology involving predictive skills is measured in the long run by the empirical test, not by consensus of professional colleagues, administrators' preferences and prejudices, political expediency, or any other nonscientific criterion. In turn the empirical test may serve as a corrective to theory and a spur to greater refinement of method.

I shall discuss briefly each of these propositions in turn.

### *From the Study of Culture Contact to That of Cultural Change*

1. The practice of professional applied anthropology forces the anthropologist to concentrate on dynamic, real life problematic situations rather than on academic or pure research problems.

A good deal has been written about the relation between the rise of applied anthropology and the shift in focus in anthropology from culture contact to culture change. Nevertheless, since the shift is critical to the development of my thesis, I shall dwell on a few of its salient features.

The emphasis of Keesing, one of the earliest administrative anthropologists, on problems of acculturation compared to that of most earlier anthropologists may serve to illustrate the point. Indeed, obviously a

rigid, mechanical approach toward the diffusion and linkage of culture traits and trait complexes, often treated out of context, grew primarily out of an academic, museum-oriented or library-oriented study of cultural phenomena, especially material culture, detached from the real life situations and problems of the peoples concerned. The term "culture carriers," still applied occasionally to human groups manifesting a particular culture in their behavioral habits, well expresses the essentially static, sum-total, non-biological, non-psychological model of culture which characterized many anthropologists both in Europe and in the Americas half a century ago and carries over to some extent today.

As soon as applied anthropologists began to work on the actual life problems of real people we found that we had to change our models of the group and its culture from static to dynamic ones in environmental context in keeping with the changing clinical "problematic situations" that required elucidation. This change in conceptual approach characterizes most applied social science research, according to Gouldner.

### *Change of Perspective Toward the Unit of Research*

A situational approach, with historical as well as ecological dimensions, developed by Bronislaw Malinowski while he was attempting to deal scientifically with problems of culture change and applied anthropology in Africa, illustrates the point. The model of a cultural institution which Malinowski formulated in his later years may profitably be contrasted to Radcliffe-Brown's paradigm of a social system. In Radcliffe-Brown's model the investigator seeks out and focuses on a so-called natural system in the Durkheimian sense by attempting to isolate it conceptually and to ignore everything else in the universe as environment. He attempts to study the social event so conceived as though it were a reality external to him. On the other hand, the investigator using Malinowski's model in the field must explicitly observe, describe, and relate to the behavior of the human group (i.e., the personnel of the institution) relevant aspects of the environment in their natural context. He does not attempt artificially to separate social relations or structures of the human group under consideration from either the world of nature with which it is transacting or from its human components as human organisms.

Comparing these approaches we gain insight as to why Radcliffe-Brown formally eschewed applied anthropology, while Malinowski fostered and encouraged it. Radcliffe-Brown's model is a construct far removed from the many-faceted everyday problematic situations with which real people living out their lives must cope, and removed from the practical problems they must resolve more or less successfully or lose their identity as a human group. Malinowski's model, also a construct, of

course, is one which reflects and includes, rather than obscures, ignores and excludes, the multidimensional nature of the problems with which the successful clinical anthropologist must deal. Indeed, despite the fact that Radcliffe-Brown had worked in the field himself, his theoretical and methodological tools seem to have been fashioned primarily to solve academic problems. Those of Malinowski, on the other hand, were sharpened operationally during the course of his professional lifetime to cope successfully with real life (in the clinical sense) problems on a scientific basis. Thus it is no accident that Goodenough uses Malinowski's model of an institution in his general book on applied anthropology.

When an anthropologist accepts a position on the staff of a local community administrator, whether the latter official be a community development project director, a public health or anti-poverty worker, a Peace Corps official, an educator, a mental health director, or a dependency group commissioner, he may attempt to project an academic type model of the community, small group, culture, or society under investigation. But a field administrator has constantly to deal with the group's actual problematic situations of every day experience, whether they be of community organization, poverty symptoms, schooling, housing, sickness, mental hygiene, crime, resources conservation or economic development. The applied anthropologist soon discovers that to do his job successfully he too must concern himself with these situations and tune in on the same wave-length, so to speak, as his objects of study including his client.

### *How to Design the Project Situationally?*

How to design this complex situation scientifically has, of course, presented the greatest obstacle to the development of clinical anthropology as well as other applied social science disciplines. For example, how shall we formulate the problem?

D. P. Sinha shows, in a case study of Birhor resettlement, that the clinical problem may be approached fruitfully from at least three dimensions:

1. as a practical problem of the tribal welfare administration of the Government of Bihar, India;
2. as a problematic situation of the community of Birhor, before, during, and after resettlement; and
3. as an analytical problem of scientific anthropology.

Thus it appears that the clinical anthropologist may fruitfully perceive his problem from three different perspectives simultaneously: that of the administrator or client; that of the local community in time and space depth; and that of himself in the role of professional scientist.



Now, the question is how does he proceed with this three-prong perspective?

First, he must translate the community's changing problematic situation, including the client-administrator's practical problem, into a scientific problem. The task requires that he extend his frame of reference to encompass all the variables relevant to the group's problematic situation. If necessary he may carry out a pilot field project in order to collect sufficient empirical data about the group so that he can formulate a heuristic working hypothesis on the basis of the facts, to be verified by subsequent field research. Since the group under consideration is involved with the limitations and potentials of its bio-physical environment, the anthropologist may not ignore these aspects of the environment nor slight them. Neither may he leave out the group's history, demography, social structure, psychology, core values, or any other dimension of the whole relevant to the problematic situation with which the community is critically concerned.

Then he must select the significant unit of research in relation to the scientific problem. He must seek out, adapt, or develop a dynamic, multi-dimensional model of his research unit which reflects the existing, changing realities of the group under consideration. Thus, to resolve the scientific problem successfully, with the approach and methods of science, the investigator is forced by the action aspects of the experiment, to consider actual problematic situations of living, ongoing human groups, not merely academic problems.

### *Role of the Clinical Anthropologist*

Finally, if the clinical anthropologist is to operate professionally in the role of an applied scientist he may never under any circumstances, as a scientist, assume an administrative role or accept the position of an administrator-client. As Rapoport has noted, policy and action, frequently the dominant preoccupation of the subjects as well as the clients of the applied anthropologist, imply value decisions. The clinical anthropologist must assiduously avoid commitments to values other than those of the scientific method and translate his scientific findings in a value-neutral framework into specific action alternatives.

This means that in his professional role, the applied clinical anthropologist must strive to resist all pressures, whether hidden or overt, to assume responsibility for the selection, from his findings, of appropriate alternatives and for the implementation of a client-selected course of action. In other words, his role of doctor of society should be limited to that of diagnosis.

On the other hand, it is generally accepted in the profession of applied anthropology that

the ideal of presenting all possible alternatives and then permitting an unrestricted selection fails to take into account the realities of the socio-political constraints and the biases of the suggester.

I take the position, however, that in the emerging profession of applied scientific anthropology, a firm statement of the professional role of the applied scientist, in contradistinction to that of the administrator-client, is imperative. The Tanganyika experiment and others indicate that such a distinction is not impossible. Moreover, only within such a strict division of labor can the "natural experiment," emerge.

### *A Fresh Look at Action Research*

Within this context the action research methodology frequently recommended as an efficient and economical method of implementing social change, and the role of the applied anthropologist in action research programs, should be re-examined and clarified. Equipped with specialized knowledge of certain aspects of the community's problematic situation, especially in regard to the finding of modern science concerning the history of the community, its relation to the larger regional, national, and world scene, and the extensiveness of and demand for its resources, the applied anthropologist may qualify as an expert. Certain anthropologists who were engaged by American Indian tribes to undertake basic research and to testify in Indian Claims Commission cases, did so qualify and, by supplying basic data relevant to the questions at issue, helped to win favorable legal judgments for the tribes. It is in such a role that the anthropologist may be best qualified to function with a group of community members who have organized themselves as an action research team. He may also function with team leaders in the delicate role of catalyst of group planning and action potentialities. It would not seem appropriate, according to the present thesis, however, for the applied anthropologist in cooperation with the people to be affected to set the goals of community action in an action situation, either on a tribal basis or by advance planning. He may train and even supervise volunteers in special skills, as Leighton did young Japanese volunteers in the Poston WRA center, for example. But he should scrupulously refrain from actually setting goals for the group either overtly or covertly.

### *Shift in Focus from Individual to Group*

2. The problematic situations with which applied anthropologists concern themselves relate primarily to human groups rather than to human individuals.

This basic point is often overlooked. Many of the disciplines which focus on man, such as medicine, psychology, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, human development, learning theory, and social work, developed their approaches by concentrating primarily on the individual rather than the group. By this I mean that the scientific problems for whose solution their traditional concepts and methods have been developed are geared to the individual as the significant unit of research. Realization of the importance of the group has come late, if at all, to most investigators in these disciplines. A change of focus from individual to group, or an extension of the research unit to include the group or aspects of it, patently has been difficult.

A certain success in this direction was achieved by Durkheim and his followers. But we should not forget that, in seeking to isolate sociological events conceptually from the rest of the universe for purposes of analysis, and to discover sociological explanations for these events which may be used as a basis for formulating sociological laws of universal validity, Durkheim and his followers removed their models from their clinical contexts. Thus their usefulness in resolving practical problems was greatly reduced. Goldenweiser's critique of this school of thought, based on anthropological field findings, suggests that it exaggerates the importance of social factors while underrating the role of nature in everyday life. Thus he points out a pitfall to be avoided in clinical anthropology.

When a measure of success in understanding group behavior has been achieved within the traditionally individual-oriented disciplines, as in social psychology, social psychiatry, culture and personality approaches, group work and community development, it has usually involved the borrowing of approaches, concepts, and methods from one or more of the disciplines which focus traditionally on the group. Examples of such donor disciplines are cultural anthropology, certain schools of sociology, Gestalt psychology, and ecology.

### *Anthropology Traditionally Stresses the Group*

Anthropology is one of the disciplines focusing on man which has grown out of an interest in understanding primarily whole group phenomena such as are expressed, for example, in the concepts of culture, race, community, society, and small group. With anthropologists, interest in the individual has come late and principally as a component of the group, that is, as a clue to the nature and dynamics of the group.

Since *Homo sapiens* is a group species, progress toward developing a science of mankind seems to depend on the development of heuristic operational hypotheses, concepts, and methods which focus primarily on whole groups. Especially does the type of conditional prediction of

change and future trends, involved in the successful solution of every problem in clinical anthropology, necessitate forecasting probable group behavior in a changing situation under certain stimuli such as individual leaders in a certain group context may provide but not the behavior of every separate individual member. The crucial prediction problem in clinical anthropology is discussed in section 4.

Here we note that clinical anthropologists, because of the nature of the practical problems with which their clients are concerned, have to concentrate on whole human groups. Moreover, since a situational approach which attempts to take into consideration all relevant factors of the problem including the group's effective environment is indispensable to forecasting the probable behavior of the group under certain changing conditions, clinical anthropologists have had to develop dynamic operational models adequate to the complex phenomena involved.

### *Search for an Adequate Model of the Community*

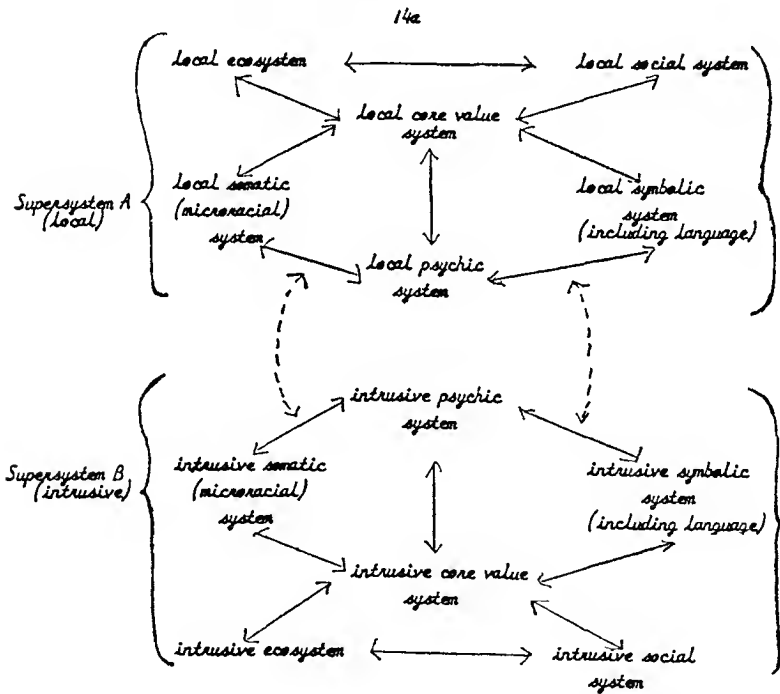
Realization that the smallest unit of research adequate to the solution of such changing group behavior problems is the changing local community or breeding population in effective environmental context has come slowly through trial and error. First, the difference between, and noninterchangeability of, the concepts of culture and society had to be spelled out. This was effectively done by Kluckhohn and Kelly, etc. The role of the little local community, long the object of research by field anthropologists seeking to understand cultural phenomena, had to be formulated as object and sample. The role of the near isolated local population transacting with an evolving ecosystem had to be investigated by means of several disciplines, including ecology, geography, demography, human genetics, and anthropology. And finally a dynamic multilevel model of a community undergoing change under pressure had to be produced—a model which afforded a niche for all aspects of the change process involved in the clinical prediction of the probable behavior of the group under certain conditions.

From an operational standpoint the model had to include both an ecological dimension and a psychic dimension, as well as dimensions to accommodate descriptions in depth of the community viewed as a social system, as a breeding population, and as a symbol-creating and symbol-transmitting unit.

An example is afforded by the model of a local community under strong externally instigated pressures to change developed experimentally by the research staff of the Indian Education, Personality and Administration project, in order to solve a problem in clinical anthropology. In this case the key relationship activating change is conceived as that between contact agents belonging to two quite different community systems.

These were the local community system under observation *in situ* and the intrusive community system, represented by agents of purposive change who are displaced from their native habitat. According to this model, reflecting a purposive acculturation situation wherein the agents from the intrusive system are seeking aggressively to change, and in certain ways to displace, the local system, the key influences are represented as at the points of contact between two juxtaposed psychosomatic and symbolic sets—the local set and the intrusive set. An attempt is made to represent this view of the contact situation diagrammatically as follows:

Model of Major Variable Systems in Contact Situation Between Two Community Supersystems: A) Local and B) Intrusive<sup>1</sup>



The multilevel model depicting variable sets involved when the behavior of the members of a local community is changing under pressures from missionaries and other agents representing an alien or exotic cultural community may have certain advantages as a field tool. Its twelve

<sup>1</sup> Taken from Laura Thompson, *Personality and Government: Findings and Recommendations of the Indian Administration Research*, Instituto Indigenista Interamericano, 1951, p. 182.

variable systems reflect the complex field situation operationally and attempt to show their interrelations as experienced by human components of the two communities involved. The model contains a niche for findings derived by means of techniques from many disciplines (e.g., ecology, social anthropology, genetics and physical anthropology, linguistics and the humanities, psychology and psychiatry) used simultaneously on a single unit of research; and it focuses on the local community (viewed as a population system in environmental context) as the primary significant unit of research in this type of scientific investigation.

Transactive processes within each community system, resulting from either externally (cross-cultural) instigated pressures or internally (intra-community) derived stresses are represented by two-way arrows. Contacts between the two supersystems in contact as represented by individual agents (each viewed as a psychosomatic-symbolic system reflecting the culture of his community idiosyncratically, including its core value system) are shown by two-way dotted line arrows. The model obviously depicts several levels of abstraction but it focuses the central inner covert position of the core value system as the most stable set of variables reflected in the structure of each of the other five systems and in the structure of the community supersystem as a whole. This major finding of the project is being validated by subsequent research.

In sum, it is suggested that insofar as the problems with which clinical anthropologists concern themselves involve whole human group problematic situations, and insofar as such problems may be resolved successfully by means of a sharpening of theoretical and methodological field tools relating to whole groups, applied anthropology is helping in a critical manner to develop a science of man.

3. Such group problematic situations are usually critical ones with human lives and human welfare at stake, in urgent need of resolution within relatively fixed limitations of time, space, and available resources. Hence the conscientious clinician is motivated to succeed in his endeavor over and above the challenge afforded by projects of a more orthodox, academic type.

### *The Cultural Factor in a Rapidly Changing World*

We live in an age when rapid, critical social change characterizes most of the world's communities. The rise of scores of new nations since the war and concomitant changes in the balance of global political power may serve as one outward sign of this change. Life goes on and decisions are made. Are they to be made on the basis of the available facts and clinical relationship?

Probably the most crucial facts usually omitted today from decision-making considerations at all levels relate to the cultural factor. I refer to national and international deliberations including especially those concerning development and anti-poverty activities at home and in so-called underdeveloped nations, to military strategy, to treaty formulations, and to other fundamental aspects of war, cold or hot. So long as this situation is not remedied we find ourselves unable to forecast probable changes in the behavior of national groups undergoing change, including our own, and hence frequently surprised and frustrated by errors of judgment.

### *Responsibility of the Anthropologist*

Who shall supply the missing ingredient if not the anthropologist? By training and experience he is equipped to discover, describe, and relate cultural facts and processes to relevant contexts. Indeed, the anthropologist's central concern, his stock in trade, is generally considered to be culture, including the analysis of cultural change and conflict. It is true that many of our theories, concepts, and methods at present are inadequate or barely adequate to the scope, depth, and subtleties, in terms of human lives, resources, and welfare, of the tasks we face. Regardless of how we delimit our problems and sharpen our tools, we tend to feel overwhelmed by the magnitude of the challenge in terms of the world's exploding billions, the urgency of the time factor, and the complexities of the historical, biological, physical, and cultural realities.

Nevertheless, probably never in the history of the discipline have anthropologists operated effectively in positions of such responsibility in human terms. But applied anthropologists, as well as others with heavy human group responsibilities, have noted that the very difficulties of the problems confronting applied anthropologists and other applied social scientists operate as a strong motivation to meet the challenge and overcome obstacles, to develop concepts, methods, and operations as the projects progress, to learn by doing, and to persevere until the task has been accomplished. Out of this work, which seems at times to verge on dedication, apparently are emerging the tools and the rules for the approaches and behavior which are moving clinical anthropologists and the discipline of applied anthropology in the direction of success as an applied science.

4. Resolution of such problematic situations, translated into scientific problems, demands of the investigator demonstrable skills in forecasting probable changes and future trends in human group behavior under certain limiting conditions and potentialities. The development of

such predictive skills depends not only on professional training and experience but also and crucially on the use of a mature scientific approach involving refinements in theory, method, and professional role.

### *The "If . . . Then" Prediction Formula*

The "if . . . then" construction of a proposition which appropriately expresses the findings of a social scientist in the role of applied anthropologist, as contrasted to the role of administrator or client group, always embodies a prediction. According to this position, it is the function of the applied anthropologist to formulate his findings in a series of statements projecting the consequences, in terms of community action, to be expected as a result of the implementation of several policy and program alternatives. He would aim to indicate to the administrator or client group the implications of alternative policies and programs so that the administrator or other decision-maker might make an informed choice between them.

Keesing was one of the first anthropologists to appreciate the importance of this mandate for professional applied anthropologists and to insist on its usefulness as an indispensable means of protecting the anthropologist in the delicate political situation engendered by his employment by a government or other client agency. Illustrations of the "if . . . then" construction as used by anthropologists may be found in Keesing's work as well as that of Elkin, Firth, Fischer, Joseph and Murray, Spindler, Thompson and others. Their infrequency in the professional literature should, however, be noted.

Use of this formula for embodying the findings of the anthropologist insures that responsibility for policy and program decisions will fall on the client and not on the anthropologist. The latter is thus free to operate in a situation which protects his role as a scientist and fosters his objectivity. It also reduces the importance of the problem of the professional ethics of the applied anthropologist.

### *Case of the Pacific Trust Territory*

Barnett has shown how difficult it is, under certain field conditions as, for instance, those operating in the Pacific Trust Territory, to maintain a strict division of labor between anthropologist and administrator, even though their roles are formally spelled out. Here the District and Staff Anthropologists' work assignment was stated as follows:

In most general terms . . . the Staff Anthropologist's duties are, either directly or indirectly, to organize and conduct research in the field and to maintain professional relations with outside specialists interested in research in the Terri-



tory. The District Anthropologist engages in research and reports to his District Administrator on the latter's authorization or on the request of the High Commissioner. His special obligation is to know the native language and customs of his district. The Staff Anthropologist's responsibilities in this respect are more generalized since they cover the Territory as a whole. Both specialists are regarded as technical experts, and as such they are expected to function as impartial intermediaries between the administration and the Micronesians. Neither has executive status and the value of both lies in their objectivity and in their abstention from policy determination and implementation. As experts on Micronesian attitudes and behaviors, they are expected to devise and recommend techniques to accomplish the objectives settled upon by the administration. In short, they are responsible for means, not ends.

Despite this carefully worded professional charter it is reported that persistent and often unwitting attempts on the part of administrators occurred to maneuver the anthropologists into a position of endorsing and advocating goals or ends to be sought.

Barnett clearly points out that this charter does not relieve anthropologists of responsibility but rather places on them a different kind of responsibility, namely the

unenviable responsibility of forecasting human behavior.

Since in social science the ability to predict changing group behavior under describable conditions may be accepted as the measure of scientific maturity, success in applied anthropology actually should depend on skill as a mature scientist.

### *The Method of Clinical Prediction*

It should be noted that predicting group behavior under certain conditions as a consequence of change, as practiced by clinical anthropologists, usually does not depend *primarily* on statistical methods or extrapolation. It thus differs markedly from probability forecasting as usually worked out by sociologists, demographers, economists, and others. By contrast, the applied anthropologist usually employs a clinical method which is as yet inadequately understood. It is based on understanding in depth of the changing culture of a community in historical and geographic perspective, including the community's covert attitudes and implicit values. Frequently the method involves knowledge of the community's unconscious group personality or psychic system. It also demands a refined concept of culture as an emergent out of the past *with direction* into the future, and specification of an *activity* unit of analysis as significant in relation to the scientific problem. Goodenough attempts to explain the method which he calls "forecasting a course of change" in his *Cooperation in Change*.

### *A Fruitful Training Ground in Scientific Anthropology*

Thus the practice of clinical anthropology affords a much-needed training experience for anthropologists who are concerned with learning to predict group behavior clinically with the degree of precision required to resolve problems in applied anthropology. It should be noted that once a series of alternate "if . . . then" propositions concerning the behavior of a community are formally submitted to his client, the applied anthropologist is "on the spot," so to say. He is publicly committed. Implementation of any one predictive proposition by the client can afford, in the long run, a situation whereby the student may test his maturity as a scientist. It is the only field situation, I suspect, which affords an anthropologist this type of opportunity for professional growth through self-correction.

### *Uses of Studies in Clinical Anthropology*

5. Success in the practice of applied anthropology involving predictive skills is measured in the long run by the empirical test, not by consensus of professional colleagues, administrators' preferences and prejudices, political expediency, or any other nonscientific criterion. In turn the empirical test may serve as a corrective to theory and a spur to greater refinement of method.

During the early years when new and more adequate operational models were being developed to cope with complex problems that were challenging applied anthropologists, it was fashionable to assume that the findings of applied anthropologists "really didn't matter" since their work, far from being used, would probably be ignored. Speaking of the use of anthropology in the United Nations, Métraux stated in 1953 that, although anthropologists were employed in several capacities, very little attention was paid to their recommendations. Without doubt such statements were based on facts.

However, now that several decades have elapsed since the publication of the first significant studies in applied anthropology, it may be rewarding to take a fresh look at the situation regarding application. For example, we note that twenty years after publication of the Leightons' classic study of Navaho health and medical problems, *The Navaho Door* is basic to the theory behind the administration's public health program on the Navaho Indian Reservation. Ten to twenty years after publication of studies by anthropologists regarding educational, mental health and

administrative problems in Guam and the Pacific Trust Territory many of the findings have been used. Almost twenty years after the Indian Education, Personality and Administration project was officially terminated the volumes reporting factual findings from the research are recommended reading for Indian Service trainees and reservation personnel. The action research methodology, introduced and taught to reservation personnel and administrators by the project staff, is advocated by the Education Division of the Service as basic to both policy and program. Approaches and information acquired by teachers, school principals and administrators during the project's training seminar and field work have become basic to in-Service training programs for many years. At least one member of the Indian Service who was trained and apprenticed by the project staff has become an executive for Bureau headquarters where he is creatively implementing project findings. He writes:

I fear my literary skill is not good enough to put into words the very strong feelings I have about the Indian Education Research project on which I was privileged to have a small part. My evaluation is based on the profound and beneficial impact this study and others have had directly on the kind and quality of the total Indian education program.

It seems so perfectly obvious now that if any program is going to be effective the operating personnel must have an understanding of the recipients to be served. It is surprising how many people involved in work with Indians do not realize that most reservation Indians have a different set of values which motivates and directs their life activities. Public school officials with whom I work are puzzled at why Indian children drop out of high school on an average of 50 per cent or more than non-Indian children and say to me, "We treat them just the same as all other children. It is here for them if they just come and get it." Unfortunately, many Indian children do not just come and get it and for the basic reason that they and their parents have not yet realized the utilitarian value in what we call modern education.

It was through the study sponsored by the Bureau and the University of Chicago that I feel I gained a basic understanding of Indian people to the point that it has made a difference in whatever I have attempted to do in directing the educational process involving reservation Indian children . . .

It should also be noted that the methods developed to resolve the problems faced by the staffs of these projects have been borrowed as a whole or in part by subsequent projects faced with similar problems in many parts of the world. A well-known example is Lewis' analysis and restudy of a Mexican community which demonstrates brilliantly the potentialities of the method of community analysis developed by the staff of the Indian Research project mentioned above, under whom Lewis trained before starting his field work at Tepoztlán.

### *Universal Applicability of Findings in Clinical Anthropology*

It should perhaps be emphasized that the approaches and findings of projects in applied anthropology, to the extent that they are scientifically valid, are of general, universal applicability. Translated in terms of the practical problems faced by anti-poverty workers, technical consultants, and community developments workers on economic development projects, some lessons learned from the above-mentioned projects may be formulated as follows:

If their work is to be effective in terms of the ends sought, most technical consultants, anti-poverty and community development workers need not only more knowledge about the communities with which they work, but also a different kind of knowledge. Facts assembled by economists, sociologists, population statisticians, etc., are essential to our understanding of these communities, but still more important perhaps to a more effective relationship between technical assistance workers and recipients of assistance is understanding at a deeper level. Reference is made to the level of implicit community goals and core values.

The term core values may be defined as the group's concept of the world, of nature, animals, plants, microorganisms and man; its concept of social order, community, the relation between the sexes and social classes; its way of thinking about the ego and its extensions, if any, beyond death and before birth; its attitudes about time, space and direction. To improve significantly the relations between assisting group and recipient community we need more knowledge of the cultures of both interacting groups at this deeper level. And it is the assisting group rather than the recipient that must seek out, learn, or in some way acquire this knowledge.

If the technical consultant or community worker were to build into himself such an understanding of the recipient community vis-à-vis his own, he would be better equipped to participate in the contact situation in a creative way. He would be prepared to regard not only the contact situation flexibly but also the directions and goals of group activity, both immediate and long-range, as emerging rather than fixed. He would be in a position to perceive the "development" process as an attempt to help the receiving community members to build new structures—economic, social, psychological, perhaps

within limits even ideological—on the basis of traditional ones, as contrasted to an attempt to superimpose upon the recipient community a preconceived, blue-print type plan accompanied by preconceived techniques for its implementation toward preconceived rigid goals.

The findings from projects in clinical anthropology indicate further that it is very important to train technical assistants on development missions toward sensitivity in regard to the actual problematic situations which the recipient community is facing and resolving more or less successfully. Blindness to biotic, ecological, and geophysical realities at the community level, for example, is a major factor in the failure or near failure of many technical development programs. A multidimensional view of community process, including the organic, ecological, socio-cultural, and psychological levels, should be projected in a training program for community workers, if enhancement of local human welfare is the goal.

### *Uses of the Natural Experiment*

A last point to be noted is that, a specific policy having been implemented by the administrator of a local group, this may be used by the clinical anthropologist as a natural experiment for testing theories and methods. This point has been made by Collier, Holmberg, Leighton, Lewis, Thompson, and others.

As defined by Festinger and Katz,

the "natural experiment" involves a change of major importance engineered by policy-makers and practitioners and not by social scientists. It is experimental from the point of view of the scientist . . . [since] it can afford opportunities for measuring the effect of the change on the assumption that the change is so clear and drastic in nature that there is no question of identifying it as the independent variable . . .

The argument for the natural experimenter is explained by Freilich to be

that this type of change can be treated as an independent variable in an experimental setting and its effect can be observed and recorded. Or, differently put, the socio-cultural system in which a clear and dramatic change has occurred is, for a given time, a natural laboratory, where given variables are in a state of control so that the effects of an independent variable (the change) can be studied. Thus, the argument would here continue that it hardly matters how control is achieved, what is important is that it is there and can be used for experimental purposes. The role of the researcher using the natural experiment is then to opportunistically capitalize on situations which exist. The opportu-

ism of the researcher lies in searching for situations where change of a clear and dramatic nature has occurred and using such situations as "natural laboratories."

Thus the significant unit of research in this type of investigation is perceived in the context of a natural "laboratory" under natural conditions in time and space. Hence all the variable sets relevant to the solution of the scientific problem may be assumed to be present, overtly or covertly, including ecological, physical, and historical ones, and the burden of identifying them falls clearly upon the investigator. In other words, successful solution of the problem has not been ruled out by the investigator's misidentification of the significant variables and therefore his failure to include them in a contrived laboratory set-up. Solution of the problem has been drafted by nature into the unit of research. Its discovery depends entirely on the training, experience, sensitivity, and ingenuity of the investigator.

### *Summary*

In this paper I have tried to show that applied anthropology is playing a major creative role in helping to develop a science of man. First, the discipline affords a strong stimulus for developing new heuristic theories, concepts, and methods. It also provides an ideal proving ground for hypothesis testing. And finally it affords a difficult training experience for field workers concerned with learning to understand human groups in depth so that they may predict probable group behavior under changing conditions within certain limiting conditions and potentialities, with the degree of precision needed to resolve practical problems.

By providing the challenge to sharpen theoretical and methodological tools for the scientific solution of local group problems of broad scope, and the crucial natural experiment for their testing, applied scientific anthropology affords the means and the motivation to move the several subdivisions of anthropology systematically and logically from their natural history phases to an empirically-based mature phase; from inductive, fact-based generalizations to heuristic deductive working hypotheses which give promise of holding up under the empirical validation test. Thus applied anthropology is helping in a positive way to develop a science of man.

Applied anthropologists have apparently failed to project an image of their discipline which reflects its significant role in present-day anthropology, not to mention its true potential in today's world. This seems to be directly responsible for loss of talent to the discipline.

These considerations seem to me particularly relevant to workers in development projects of all types, including anti-poverty programs

at home. For development projects afford the opportunity simultaneously to test theoretical concepts and to formulate new ones. This suggests the promising scope for theoretical research in development. Technical assistance, anti-poverty, and community workers who successfully assume the role of scientists are thus directly helping to create a science of man.

MAN DEALS WITH his environment by laboring and using tools. In the process, and in preparing his successors for their task, he relies upon symbols and calls culture into being. Within culture lie many things: implements and knowledge of their use, social relations and the understanding of their manipulation, and a further area—more conceptual than these other two—wherein lies a culture's ideas of origin and destiny, the meaning of everyday life, and the relations between man and nature. It is the last area that is denoted as "ideology."

The anthropological approach to ideology obviously enlarges the meaning of the term as commonly used. It includes the popular concept of ideology as attachment to specific political credos and regards patriotism, nationalism, and anarchism as being equally ideological. To the extent that republicanism, socialism, monarchism, fascism, and communism connote intellectual commitments rather than *de facto* political and economic systems they are also ideologies. But there is more than "-isms" to this view of ideology. Religion is included in its various guises, but the comparability of fervor sometimes manifest in the holding of religious and political ideas does not mean that emotional attachment is the fundamental criterion of ideology, though it is often a concomitant.

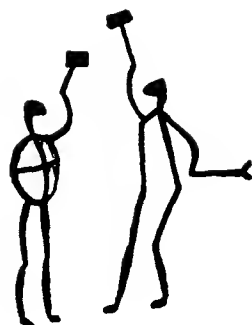
At the root of ideology is explication: ideologies explain to man why he is, whence he came, what he should be. Ideologies explain how the universe operates, how the environment may



be dealt with, and the end to which a culture struggles. Phrased in this way, it will be seen that science, too, is an ideology for, while it constantly revises and refines its techniques and products, it is a way of looking at the universe.

Empiricism and pragmatism have probably played significant roles in every cultural approach to the challenges of life. Nevertheless, most cultures have their greatest ideological investments in supernatural interpretations of cosmic questions. It is this sector of anthropological concern with ideology that is explored in the following selections.

## 37 Tapirapé Shamanism



Charles Wagley

ACCORDING TO E. B. TYLOR, WITH WHOSE DEFINITION OF CULTURE THIS book began, the belief in spirits—animism—is the simplest and most common denominator of religious belief. Other nineteenth-century figures offered alternative suggestions, but a continuing focus of interest in the study of the religious aspects of simpler cultures has continued to be placed on shamanism and, of course, on the central role of the shaman.

The word "shaman" presents all kinds of difficulties. Even its etymology is obscure. That it has Asian roots is certain, but whether it is derived from Sanskrit or Tungussic has never been decided. More serious, however, is the fact that shamanism seems to be more of a cover designation for a lot of disparate things than a clear and unified concept. It is frequently assumed that a shaman cannot be a full-time professional whose livelihood depends on his ritual role. Two things are wrong with that: A lot of people who are unhesitatingly identified as "priests" seem

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The author (b. 1913) is Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Institute of Latin American Studies at Columbia University. He has done fieldwork in various parts of Latin America, particularly in Guatemala and Brazil. In addition to his ethnographic specialization, Wagley has made contributions to problems of cultural typology and racism. Among his works are *Economics of a Guatemalan Village* (1941); *Social and Religious Life of a Guatemalan Village* (1949); *Race and Class in Rural Brazil* (editor) (1952); *Amazon Town* (1953); (with Marvin Harris) *Minorities in the New World* (1958); and *An Introduction to Brazil* (1963). His most recent book is *The Latin American Tradition* (1968).

on this ground to be better classified as shamans. Second, there have been full-time religious practitioners who are known as shamans. A good example are the shamans who served in the courts of the Mongol emperors of China.

Alternatively, the important criterion of shamanism is its association with animism. The shaman is viewed as master of rituals which bridge the gap between man and spirit. Some students find such a criterion so broad as to be almost meaningless and certainly not capable of differentiating shamanism from other systems which are said to be priestly. In the end it almost seems as if the main distinction is a pejorative one, an attempt to separate our "advanced" religious beliefs from their "primitive" ones.

There is one thing we have not yet mentioned and that may be the crucial element underlying shamanism. A shaman is not a mere practitioner or liturgist and one doesn't become a shaman simply because one wants to. The shaman has power, a special, mysteriously derived, dangerous supernatural power. Often unwanted, it may kill its possessor. Though different shamans have different degrees of power and may learn to control it, basically it is not something acquired or mastered by study but a gift (or curse) that comes from outside. Perhaps the best way of trying to understand it is to see it through the eyes of a skilled ethnographer. Even clearer perspective may be derived from comparing Charles Wagley's description of the shamanistic religion of a remote Amerindian society with M. J. Ruel's description of the non-shamanistic, but otherwise somewhat similar, religion of the Kuria of east Africa (II:38).

### *Introduction*

The Tapirapé Indians are a Tupi-speaking tribe living in Central Brazil west of the Araguaya River. Their villages formerly extended some two hundred miles to the north of the Tapirapé River, an affluent of the Araguaya; but today their one remaining village lies west of the Araguaya, about forty miles north of the Tapirapé and 160 miles from the point of union of the two rivers. This settlement contains a total population that does not exceed 150 people, the residue of five villages that probably existed so late as the turn of the century and that are said to have had a population of about two hundred people each. A progressive population decline has followed the acquiring of diseases from contact with the neighboring Carajá Indians of the Araguaya River and from European visitors. Such contacts, however, have left their aboriginal culture little changed.

The Tapirapé are properly a forest people, maintaining an agricultural life on clearings hewed from the great tropical forest. Their cul-

tivated fields are large, producing manioc (both *Manihot manihot* and the sweet species *Manihot palmata aypi*), maize, pumpkins, beans, peppers, yams, kará (*Dioscorea* sp.), cotton, and bananas.

The dry months of June through September of each year are devoted to clearing the garden sites. This work is done by men, frequently working individually, sometimes in communal labor formed by the men's moiety groups. When the clearing is done collectively, the large field is divided into individual plots which become individual property; and planting, which begins after the first light rains of October, is done individually and principally by the men. Cotton and peanuts, however, are women's crops. The women plant these in their husband's garden plots and harvest them themselves. While a new garden plot is cleared each year, a particular garden plot is generally used for two years and then abandoned. A man plants such crops as maize, beans, and peppers on the plot the first year and as they are harvested, he replants the plot with manioc. Maize is harvested from the end of December through February, the season of heaviest rains; while other crops are harvested at the end of the rains in May and June.

Large gardens with many different crops guarantee to the Tapirapé a variety and abundance of garden stuff, but meat and fish are definitely luxuries. People in the village could not remember a time when there had been real hunger among them, but they were frequently hungry for meat and fish. This lack in the diet is supplied by frequent trips to the near-by Tapirapé River and the grass plains that border it where fish and game, principally wild pork (*Tagassu pecari*), deer, peccary (*Tagassu tajacu*), water fowl, and tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*) are found in abundance. During the dry season these plains abound in piqui (*Caryocar villosum*), palm nuts especially andiroba (*Carapa guyanensis*), used for body oil—and other wild fruits.

Among the Tapirapé wealth is not reckoned in terms of basic subsistence, for these goods are so easy to obtain as to be considered with little regard. The possessions that lend real distinction of wealth are such luxury articles as the breast and tail feathers of the red parrot (*Ara chloroptera*?), beads, and pieces of hardware acquired through contact with white men or trading with other Indians. These goods are accordingly the most valued media of exchange in the community. Other goods used for a medium of exchange were urucú (*Bixa orellana*), tobacco, extra hammocks, decorated gourds, string for binding feathers to arrows, and cane arrow shafts.

The houses of a Tapirapé village form a circle around a great central ceremonial men's house. There are nine of these large thatch dwellings with rounded roofs in the modern Tapirapé village; four to eight simple families (father, mother, and children) share a house. Each simple family has a section of the unpartitioned house where they lead a domestic

life separate from the others. Residence is matrilocal and the women of such a household are ideally related by kinship; yet each large household has a male leader, a man of prestige, who is usually the husband of one of the older women of the female kinship group. Apart from these residential groupings, the Tapirapé are divided in two other ways.

First, all Tapirapé men belong to one of the two patrilineal non-exogamic ceremonial moieties and each moiety is further divided into three age grades. There are consequently two groups of youths, two groups of adult men of warrior age, and two groups of older men. Each of these groups bears the name of a mythical bird, the word *wirã*—bird—itsself being used as the generic name for the groups. These *wirã* function as units in hunting and in clearing garden sites; parallel groups also dance against one another in the ceremonials and offer reciprocal feasts to each other. The warrior-age group of each of these moieties has a “walking leader” for hunting excursions and other communal work and a “singing leader” for ceremonials.

Both men and women of the Tapirapé are also divided into eight “feasting” groups called *tātáupawã*—literally, “fire all to eat.” Men belong to their father’s feasting group and women to their mother’s. Feasting groups are not only non-exogamic but people prefer to marry with their own group so that husband and wife may attend feasts together. These groups carry names of the mythological heads of the legendary original eight households of the first Tapirapé village. On occasion during the dry season the feast groups meet at sunset on the dance plaza for a ceremonial feast, each member bringing his or her contribution to the common meal.

The kinship system is perhaps a more important factor in assuring solidarity to the Tapirapé than either the moieties or the household groups. Tapirapé kinship is of the type known as “bifurcate merging”—the chief principle of the system being that all persons of one generation who are related through either mother or father, no matter how distantly, are considered brothers and sisters. Children of persons calling each other siblings are also siblings. The mother’s “sisters” are called mother and the father’s “brothers,” father. The mother’s brothers and father’s sisters are distinguished by special terms. Similarly, the children of a man’s brothers are considered sons and daughters of the man himself, and the children of a woman’s sisters are considered her children. Children of a man’s sister or a woman’s brother are given special terms.

The wide inclusiveness of these kinship affiliations makes it possible for an individual to call the majority of his fellow villagers—and in former days those of other villages—by terms of close relationship. Siblings are under obligation to lend aid to one another when it is needed and, in the case of sorcery, to avenge wrong done to any of them. The kinship system accordingly provides an important bond of solidarity

within this society which lacks strong centralized control to hold it together.

### *Source of Shamanistic Power*

A multitude of spirits populate the unseen world of the Tapirapé. These spirits, known by the generic term of *ančúnga*, are of two general types: ghosts, *ančúnga iínwera*, the disembodied souls of the dead; and second, malevolent beings of many classes and descriptions. Ghosts inhabit abandoned village sites where they relive their earthly lives, yet frequently they travel about at night and, especially during the rainy season, they come near the village of the living, for "they are cold" and come near human habitations to get warm. People are accordingly afraid to venture beyond the village plaza at night. Now and again, ghosts appear to living people, frightening them, sometimes throwing a dust-like substance over them and causing them to fall insensible.

Several people fell from fright upon seeing a ghost during my visit. One woman saw a ghost "bathing in the stream" when she went to the small brook to drink water after dark. She said that the ghost approached and struck her. A man walking in his garden after dark saw the ghost of a known person, some years dead. "It was white and his eyes had fallen out. He still had some flesh and he had *urucú* in his hair." Yet another man also met a ghost which was "white with big holes instead of eyes." Ghosts of individuals who have been dead many years "have no flesh; they have only bones." The ghosts that appear to the living follow the pattern of the gradual disintegration of the body.

Ghosts gather around a new grave to carry away the soul at time of burial; so they are especially dangerous to people at the time of funerals. When a Tapirapé man dies, men carry machetes and mirrors to the wake for protection against the ghosts. If ghosts see their reflections in mirrors, they are frightened away.

The principal encounters of the Tapirapé with ghosts are in dreams. Dreamers sometimes visit them in their villages and at times learn from them new ceremonial songs which they hear in the traditional Tapirapé ceremonials that the ghosts continue to carry on after they have left the village of the living.

After an indeterminate period the ghosts themselves die and their spirits then become changed into animals. The spirit of the dead ghost of a man of prestige may become a toad (*Pipa pipa*); that of a common man a dove. Among the other animals into which spirits of dead ghosts become changed are frogs, deer, paca (*Cuniculus paca*).

Besides the ghosts there are an infinite number of many different species of *ančúnga* of the demonic class, all generally living at a great distance deep in the forest. It is fortunate that their dwellings are so distant,

for these creatures are very dangerous, killing Tapirapé whenever possible. In legendary times these demonic beings were more numerous than at present and killed many Tapirapé, but Waré, a powerful shaman and legendary hero, engaged in a constant warfare of wits with them and succeeded in killing many of them. He destroyed the dangerous *awakú anká* by setting fire to their stringy hair which trailed far behind them as they walked through the forest. He also killed the *mupí anká*, the beings that clubbed men to death and drank their blood.

Some of these demons of the forest are now "pets" of the Tapirapé, and are no longer dangerous to them. The comparatively harmless *ančúnga*, in a sense domesticated by Tapirapé men, come at intervals throughout the year to live in the large central men's house. While an *ančúnga* is inhabiting this ceremonial house, Tapirapé men sing and dance with masks representing the visiting spirit.

Knowledge of the supernatural world is gained chiefly through the dream experiences of shamans or *pančé*, for among the Tapirapé shamanistic power derives from dreams and from powers revealed in them. Dreams are believed to be journeys. The *iungá*, the soul, may free itself from the *eté*, the body, in sleep, and move freely in time and space. Obviously anyone may dream but frequent dreaming is evidence of shamanistic power. Laymen who dream very much are afraid, for they do not belong in this supernatural world, or they believe that they should become shamans.

Campukwi, who was not a shaman, indicated this fear in telling me his dream experience. When he saw dangerous *ančúnga* in his dream, he had no recourse but to run: "I am not a shaman. I was afraid. I ran. They would have killed me." Only shamans have the supernatural power to move freely in this dream-world of ghosts and demons. A shaman is never afraid in his dream travels, for ghosts are his friends and the power of a shaman grows in proportion as he fraternizes with the demonic spirits of the forest. After a dream-visit from a shaman, breeds of demonic spirits may become his familiars, obedient to his calls for aid. Turning himself into a bird or launching himself through the air in his "canoe," a half gourd, he travels to the villages of ghosts, to the houses of demonic spirits, or to such temporal places as the Brazilian settlements or Carajá villages on the Araguaya River. Then, too, time is no obstacle; in a sleep of a few minutes he may experience three or four days of dream adventure.

The dream experience of Ikanancowi, a powerful shaman who died a few years before my visit, will illustrate these points. In his dream he walked far to the shores of a large lake deep in the jungle. There he heard dogs barking and ran in the direction from which the noise came until he met several forest spirits of the breed called *mupí anká*. They were tearing a bat out of a tree for food. The spirits talked with Ikanancowi and invited him to return to their village, which was situated upon the lake. In

the village he saw *periquitos* (Psittacidae) and many *socó* (*Butorides* sp.), birds which they keep as pets. The *ančúnga* had several pots of *kauí* and invited Ikanancowi to eat with them. He refused for he saw that their *kauí* was made from human blood. Ikanancowi watched one spirit drink of the *kauí* and saw him vomit blood immediately afterwards; the shaman saw a second spirit drink from another pot and immediately spurt blood from his anus. He saw the *mumpí anká* vomit up their entrails and throw them upon the ground, but he soon saw that this was only a trick; they would not die, for they had more intestines. After this visit the *mumpí anká* called Ikanancowi father and he called them his sons; he visited them in his dreams frequently and he had *mumpí anká* near him always. When Ikanancowi danced and sang in the annual shamanistic ceremony against Thunder, he painted his chest and chin red with *urucu*, representing the *kauí* of blood which drools from the mouths of the *mumpí anká* after the vomit and he called these spirits to his aid in his songs. Other shamans have had familiar spirits but none have had such dangerous spirits as the *mumpí anká*; "people were very much afraid of Ikanancowi," for these "*ančúnga* are very dangerous."

In another dream told to me a shaman met the forest spirits called *oréya*. These have long hair wound in a mass on top of their heads and they carry one arrow for the bows with which they kill men. The *oréya* were about to shoot the shaman, but when he shouted, "No, I am a shaman," they did not harm him. Instead they gave him food and helped him return through the deep forest to the village. Another shaman had *ančúnga anú awa* as his familiars. These forest demons have protruding eyes and sharp pointed chins. They kill Tapirapé by grabbing them from behind as they walk unsuspectingly through the forest, clapping their hands over the victim's mouth and driving their pointed chins into the back of his neck. A man caught by one of these *ančúnga* dies gurgling and staring, unable to speak; so, although found alive he may never explain what happened to him. A shaman with such dangerous familiars as these protects the laity by keeping his spirits under control.

One powerful shaman may have several demonic familiars and his responsibility and prestige grow with their numbers and strength. Panteri, perhaps the most powerful shaman living in 1940, had several breeds of familiars garnered from his dreams. He was, of course, accustomed to visiting the villages of ghosts and frequently saw and talked with ghosts in his nightly dreams. He had visited the *anapi ančúnga*, beings with huge penises with which they kill people by sodomy and by copulation. Panteri travelled once in his dreams over a high mountain ridge to the north of the Tapirapé country where he visited with the ghosts of the hostile Gê-speaking Kayapo. These enemy ghosts too became his familiars and he says that they will warn him if and when the living Kayapo plan to attack the Tapirapé. Again, in one of his dreams, Panteri travelled two days through



thick forest through which no paths led. Suddenly he found himself at the mouth of the Tapirapé River where it runs into the Araguaya. Inside a near-by hill he visited *anacówa*, the large red parrot from which supernatural beings and the souls of dead shamans pluck their everlasting supply of red feathers for decoration.

Panteri also visited the forest demons called *peropi awa*, who have the power to send fevers to the Tapirapé. About this visit to their "house" he related the following: "I saw many pets. They have periquitos, parrots, many pets . . . I had not seen them before. I saw there a paca. The paca was cold; it was shivering. The paca had fever [chills], I knew that the Tapirapé would all have fever. I told many people that this would occur but there was nothing I could do about it." During his many dream travels Panteri has also visited Maratawa, the home of heroic ancestors and deceased shamans and he has looked down upon many Brazilian settlements on the Araguaya River.

There are certain of the shamans who are said to make frequent trips to the sky in their "canoes" and to count powerful celestial phenomena among their powers. The Milky Way was spoken of as the "Road of the *Pančé*." Once when comparing his powers with those of another shaman, a shaman told me that he dreamed only on earth level and so was not so powerful as the other who frequently travelled in the sky. The other, he said, "had visited *é éco*, the Pleiades, and *kopia xawana*, the Jaguar of the Skies." When this shaman dies, it is thought that many terrestrial jaguars, sent by the Jaguar of the Skies, will haunt the confines of the village. I was told, too, that when the powerful shaman Wantanam died the "sun was large and red with the blood of the shaman"; it was "hot" and "angry" because a shaman had died.

### *Sorcery*

The Tapirapé tell of great battles between strong shamans, each supported by his own retinue of powers. During my stay with the Tapirapé there were rumors of a possible combat between Urukumu and Panteri, the two strongest shamans. Many people believed that it would be caused by the death of a warm personal friend of Panteri through the suspected sorcery by Urukumu. One man even described how he thought that the combat would take place. "Panteri will smoke much tobacco and then he will go to his hammock to sleep. He will go [in his dream] in his 'canoe' to the top of a high mountain. From there he will look about until he sees [the soul of] Urukumu. From there Panteri will throw his *ankungitána*; will wrap itself around [the soul of] Urukumu, carrying him off into the sky." Now the various familiar powers of both shamans hasten to their aid; it was at this point that the narrator, visualizing the possible battle of powers, listed the powers that would come to the aid of each shaman. A shaman whose

soul has thus been captured by another falls prey to chills and fevers and soon dies, with his last breath whispering in song that he leaves the earth and possibly even telling gaspingly the name of the shaman who caused his death. Both shamans involved in the rumored combat denied knowledge or intention to wage it.

As might be expected, the same methods said to be used by shamans against one another may also be used against laymen. Shamans are believed to steal souls that are wandering in dream journeys. The shaman may send his *ankungitána* to strike the soul of his victim over the head or to tie it up and carry it off. The one whose soul is thus either incapacitated or imprisoned soon dies. A shaman may call upon his familiar demonic spirits of the forest to deal with a chosen victim or may in his dreams shoot a victim's spirit with small arrows causing at times death and at times only boils. Still another method of attack is for the shaman to throw a fishbone (*ipirā kunya*) or gnawing worms (*uuáka* or *áwai*) into his victim's body causing illness and death. The treatment of illness consists of removing from the victim's body these malignant arrows, fishbones, and worms that are the cause of illness.

In illness and other misfortune, sorcery is always suspected by the Tapirapé and some shaman is accordingly always believed responsible. Sorcery, however, is believed to be the action of shamans in dreams, and although such a negative statement can obviously not be substantiated, it seems never to be consciously practised. But there is, so far as the writer knows, no use of incantations or mechanical devices for the deliberate inducing of sympathetic magic.

All Tapirapé are thought, however, to die by sorcery and at each death suspicion turns toward a shaman. At the death of a child or woman of low status, suspicion may arise and then soon die down but when the deceased is a man of status, his brothers, sons, or sisters' sons become violent in their grief and may murder the shaman toward whom suspicion points. Sometimes, after a long series of deaths, suspicion is fixed upon one famous and strong shaman and the Tapirapé decide informally that he must be killed. In such cases the revenge-murder occurs within the first few days after a death when the relatives are "sad." If the first depression of mourning wears off without violence to the shaman, the anger toward him passes and he is out of danger. Thus, after a man of rather high status had died both Urukumu and Wantanamu, *pančés* of sufficient power to be suspected of causing his death, both left the village, ostensibly on fishing trips, staying away until the brothers of the deceased had calmed down again.

The eight living men (*marántxunkanera* or "killers") who had killed *pančés* attest to the frequency of revenge killing of shamans because of suspected sorcery. Within the memory of one informant, Kamairá, who was approximately forty years old, ten shamans had been killed. During

his youth he had killed a shaman, *Pančewáni*, because he believed him responsible for his younger brother's death. Going to the shaman's house the second night after his brother's death, Kamairá found the shaman asleep and killed him with several arrows through the abdomen. According to various informants, the epidemic of deaths that had been occurring then came to a halt, thus proving *Pančewáni's* guilt. In another case the killer hid in the forest and shot the suspected shaman as he passed on his way to his garden; still another shaman was clubbed to death as he sat with his family in the village plaza. Two living "killers" had murdered women shamans by clubbing them to death. *Kučamančé* (*kučan*, woman; *pančé*, shaman) generally die by violence, according to informants; women shamans "are dangerous." "They dream more than men [shamans] and they kill many Tapirapé [in dreams]," said one man. Ironically, all three of the more powerful shamans living today, at least two of whom are currently in danger because they are considered powerful enough to be suspected of "evil dreaming," murdered shamans during their youth.

Informants could not remember any one occasion when a shaman thus murdered was avenged by his relatives; yet informants did say that a shaman with several adult brothers—true siblings—strong enough to avenge him, is generally not murdered. A strong shaman makes an effort to have a strong family group about him for protection. Informants could not remember that murdered shamans had ever been revenged by their familiar spirits, although one man made the point that shamans were murdered only by persons under the influence of great anger or grief, for people normally are afraid of the familiars of shamans. Special rites are observed by anyone who has murdered a shaman, to protect him and the rest of the tribe against possible danger. On the day following the murder the *marántxunkanéra* must retire to his hammock and here eat of a white clay, *iwí činga*, and drink until he vomits of a brew made of boiling a man's leg ornament in water. Vomiting cleanses his body "of the blood of the shaman." The killer must paint his entire body black with *genipa* (*Genipa americana*) and put red urucu paint in his hair; he should also scratch his chest, arms, thighs, and back with teeth of the dog fish, just as he did in the ceremony he had performed as a young boy to make himself a strong adult. Then, each year at the annual ceremony during the harvests in May and June, all who have killed shamans must drink of *kauió* until they vomit, so cleansing themselves of the shaman's blood for the period until the next harvest.

### *Duties of the Shaman*

Among the Tapirapé tobacco is a sacred plant necessary for curing and for all shamanistic activities; yet, while it is found widely near Tapirapé village and near their gardens, it is not strictly a cultivated plant.

People know where a patch of tobacco grows and go there to pick it. Occasionally they transplant tobacco nearer to their houses or to their gardens but for the most part the patches seed themselves. When an individual discovers a new patch of tobacco, he hastily builds a low fence around it to inform others that it belongs to him. This native tobacco is smoked by laymen in short tubular pipes made of wood or clay and by shamans in long clay pipes, sometimes 30 centimeters long.

Tobacco is used for leisure-time smoking for pleasure; but its principal uses among the Tapirapé are as a stimulant and as a medicine. Each night after a long day's work or while travelling or hunting, Tapirapé men blow smoke over their tired legs, arms, and backs and sometimes men can be seen fumigating their tired wives or companions. They accompany the fumigation of their bodies with massage, rubbing their arms and legs toward the extremities. Tiredness and soreness are considered extraneous substances acquired during the day through exercise and it is believed they may be massaged and fumigated from the body.

Treating of the sick is the shaman's most common duty and the use of tobacco is always a necessary prelude and accompaniment to this. Unless the illness is serious enough to warrant immediate treatment, shamans always cure in the late evening. A shaman comes to his patient, and squats near the patient's hammock, his first act is always to light his pipe. When the patient has a fever or has fallen unconscious from the sight of a ghost, the principal method of treatment is by massage. The shaman blows smoke over the entire body of the patient; then he blows smoke over his own hands, spits into them, and massages the patient slowly and firmly, always toward the extremities of the body. He shows that he is removing a foreign substance by a quick movement of his hands as he reaches the end of an arm or leg.

The more frequent method of curing, however, is by the extraction of a malignant object by sucking. The shaman squats alongside the hammock of his patient and begins to "eat smoke"—swallow large gulps of tobacco smoke from his pipe. He forces the smoke with great intakes of breath deep down into his stomach; soon he becomes intoxicated and nauseated; he vomits violently and smoke spews from his stomach. He groans and clears his throat in the manner of a person gagging with nausea but unable to vomit. By sucking back what he vomits he accumulates saliva in his mouth.

In the midst of this process he stops several times to suck on the body of his patient and finally, with one awful heave, he spews all the accumulated material on the ground. He then searches in this mess for the intrusive object that has been causing the illness. Never once did I see a shaman show the intrusive object to observers. As one treatment a Tapirapé *panché* usually repeats this process of "eating smoke," sucking, and vomiting several times. Sometimes, when a man of prestige is ill, two

or even three shamans will cure side by side in this manner and the noise of violent vomiting resounds throughout the village.

One other method of curing was observed. During an epidemic of fever Panteri made a collective cure to drive fever out of the village and disinfect the people of the village against it. Two men were dispatched to collect wild honey; this was then mixed with water, making a weak honey mixture. Panteri, after first smoking for a time, went from house to house taking the honey mixture in his mouth and spraying it over the houses and its occupants. He carefully sprayed and massaged the patients who had fever and removed the foreign substance from their bodies. For several hours he worked, spraying both the inside and outside of the houses, including the central ceremonial house of the men. It was explained that the honey alone did not have a therapeutic effect against fever but sprayed from the mouth of a *pančé* it drove away fevers.

Shamans also protect the Tapirapé against ghosts. All people who see ghosts faint from fright or from the white substance with which the ghost covers their body. Shamans were called to blow smoke over them and to massage this substance from their bodies. During one funeral dance the shaman Panteri "saw many ghosts" in the environs of the village, recognizing some as long-dead relatives of the deceased. By blowing tobacco smoke about and by going among the ghosts with a large mirror he drove them away before they did any harm.

Shamans are necessary in several life situations other than illness. For instance, shamans are thought among the Tapirapé to control the pregnancy of women. While pregnancy is known to be related to sexual intercourse, conception is thought to take place only when a shaman "brings a child to a woman." Several species of birds, of fish, of insects, and several natural phenomena, especially thunder, have children: that is, they are thought to control "spirits of children." A shaman steals, or more simply, takes spirits of children from these sources and brings them to a woman while she sleeps. Parents who wish children can bring presents to a *pančé* to "make him dream and bring a child to them." Most Tapirapé parents can identify the source of their children and the shaman who brought them. One father explained that he had taken honey to the *pančé* Urukumu, making him dream, and that Urukumu had then travelled to the house of Thunder and brought back a child to his wife. Another gave a present of fish to a shaman who brought back a child from the small fish called piau (*Leporinus* sp.); and yet another gave honey to a *pančé* who brought back a child from the horsefly (Tabanidae).

To the Tapirapé all good and likewise all evil can be laid at the door of the shaman. Consequently a phenomenon such as barrenness is always the fault of the shaman. A barren woman or a man with no children by his wife must have "quarreled much with the *pančé*." For example, it was clear to Kamairaho that his failure to have children by the three wives

with whom he had lived during his lifetime was due to the shaman: "They do not want me to have a child," he said. He had no suspicion concerning his own sterility, even though his present and third wife had had a daughter by her first husband; for according to Tapirapé belief, all men who have sexual relations with a woman during her pregnancy are biological fathers of the child, and Kamairaho was in this manner the "father" of several children.

The safety of Tapirapé men depends upon the power of their shaman during the period each October and November when they must swim while they fish and shoot turtles; for in this region of Brazil rivers are infested with alligators, sting rays (*Potamotrygon hystrix*), and the carnivorous fish called piranha (Serrasalminae). The Tapirapé also believe that large snakes lurk in deep pools of the rivers ready to wrap themselves around men and pull them beneath the water. During the year men will not swim in deep water unless it is absolutely necessary and they will fish only in shallow clear rapids. When they must swim to catch turtles, a shaman guarantees their safety. A powerful shaman dreams. He travels to the river, ties the jaws of the alligators with wires, strikes the *piranha* across their teeth so they cannot bite, and ties up the large snakes into knots with their own tails.

The abundance of the food supply may also become the responsibility of the shaman. Some powerful shamans have the ability to control the movements and the increase of the bands of pigs. These shamans visit in their dreams the "home of wild pigs" near the Tapirapé River on a hill called by them *Towaiyawá*—ringed tail of the *coati* (*Nasua sp.*). There the shaman has sexual intercourse with female pigs, causing large increase in the bands. Those pigs that run fastest and are hardest to kill are these "children of the *panché*." The shaman's control over the movement of bands of pigs comes through his control over the *ančúnga* called *ampukáya*—"crying spirits." Wild pigs are said to be "pets" of these spirits and follow them about. Shamans who are powerful enough capture these spirits and take them, followed by their pets, to an appointed place where Tapirapé men wait to kill the pigs. None of the living shamans was believed to be capable of these controls over the wild pigs and several of the Indians blamed the recent lack of success of hunting expeditions and the apparent scarcity of pigs on the declining power of the shamans.

The dream journeys of the shamans also give them the power of prophecy, as was indicated by Panteri's vision of the fever in the village of the *peropí áwa*. Such dream experiences are not limited to the demonic world but sometimes occur in other earthly regions. The shaman may visit Carajá villages or Brazilian settlements along the Araguaya, where he sometimes learns facts of great interest or importance to his fellow-tribesmen. When Panteri visited the Brazilian settlements along the Araguaya River for the first time, he said that he recognized faces that he

saw, for he had been to these places many times in his dreams. When I returned to the Tapirapé village after three months' absence, one shaman claimed to have prophesied my arrival to the day. He had travelled in his dream, he said, to the Araguaya River and had seen my canoe moving up the Tapirapé River. Another in the same way foresaw the arrival of a young Tapirapé who was returning from several weeks on the Araguaya. Frequently shamans, through their dreams, learn and then tell the Tapirapé where large bands of wild pigs can be found and advise them how to approach the band.

The cleansing of food may be accomplished by the shaman by tasting it or by blowing smoke or his breath over it. Several times each year these rites are performed over the first fruits of harvests to insure their safety before the people taste the crop. In December the first ears of the new maize are picked and presented to a strong shaman who then gives them to his wife to cook. At sundown of the day on which this is done the shaman walks to the central plaza followed by his wife, who carries the cooked maize and places it in a pile before him, ready for the ceremonies that will follow. In 1939, Panteri was the shaman who initiated this ceremony and he was joined by five other proved shamans. The people of the village gathered about this group of shamans who sat in a circle facing the maize. One by one the shamans took deep draughts from their burning pipes and blew the smoke over the maize. Then, one by one again, each pinched off a few grains from an ear and ate them. When the last had tasted the new maize, the ceremony was ended. The youngsters of the village then fell upon the pile of maize; the crop had been tasted by the shamans and found free from danger for the people. The next day maize was eaten in all houses.

A similar ceremony is performed in August or September with the first wild honey of the season, and again about January or February when new corn is ground to make the thick beverage kauí. I did not hear of such "tasting of first fruits" by shamans for other garden crops and informants were unable to remember any one occasion when shamans had found new maize or honey too dangerous for consumption by the people.

Again, each year in the first months of the rainy season when the new crop of maize is threatened by the first heavy rains and electrical storms, Tapirapé shamans must "fight" against Thunder and his minions in order to protect the gardens and even the people themselves from his violence. This four-day ceremony is the culmination of shamanistic activity among the Tapirapé and its most exotic and violent manifestation.

### *Social Position of the Shaman*

The Tapirapé do not have chieftains with highly centralized authority. Instead one finds among them respected individuals who are described

modernly by the Tapirapé with the Portuguese term "*capitão*." Such men of great prestige have in every instance gained the respect of their fellow tribesmen in one or more—usually at least two—of three ways.

First, an individual may be singled out by his parents, who must themselves be people of some prestige for especial treatment as a *čiríkakántu*, a favored child. Parents bestow upon such a child a series of important names which in themselves carry respect and he is taught with special care the myths, songs, dances, and manual techniques of the tribe. His parents may wait upon him, bringing him water to drink and to wash himself with and preparing special foods for him. Special care is taken in oiling and painting his body and elaborate decorations are made for him to wear during the annual harvest ceremonies. For the *čiríkakántu* are the central figures in part of this ceremony. Again, his body decorations are more elaborate than those of an ordinary youth when he dances during the ceremony of reaching maturity.

Secondly, an individual may gain respect through being chosen as a leader of the warrior-age group of his ceremonial moiety. His companions may select him as their "walking leader"—*antá úwa*—or as their "song leader"—*amoniká úwa*—because of his special abilities in hunting, gardening, manual technique, singing, or dancing. It frequently happens that these chosen leaders were *čiríkakántu* when they were children, for the special treatment and educational advantages given such children develop qualities of leadership.

The third and most important road to prestige lies in shamanism. It has been shown that the Tapirapé depend upon their shamans to control the dangerous spirit world, to remove danger from first fruits, to predict the future, to bring spirits of children to their parents, and to cure the ill. In all life situations where chance or the unpredictable figure the Tapirapé depend markedly upon their shamans. Thus the greatest prestige which Tapirapé culture offers accrues to the shaman. This prestige is reflected in the concepts of a separate afterlife for shamans and in the identification of ancestral culture heroes as shamans. Informants telling of Petura, the bringer of such phenomena as fire and daylight to the Tapirapé, and of Ware, who killed so many dangerous *ančúnga*, frequently referred to them as "great shamans." While a Tapirapé layman becomes a disembodied soul at death, the afterlife of a shaman is but a continuation of his present life under ideal circumstances. His soul goes to Maratawa, the home of the culture heroes. This home of the privileged dead lies far to the northwest "where the earth ends and the water begins" and where the sun returns to sleep after its travels across the sky. In Maratawa shamans have an inexhaustible supply of tobacco, many red parrot feathers, much manioc, kauí, bananas, meat, and all the other necessities and luxuries of life. Frequently a shaman is buried with a pipe filled with tobacco in his mouth, so that he may have smoke to drive out fatigue on the trip to



Maratawa; and sometimes food is buried with the body so he may eat, for the journey to Maratawa is long.

Aside from these non-material considerations, there is one very real factor which insures social respect to the Tapirapé shaman. Shamans are in general the wealthiest men among the Tapirapé. Although they may at times receive meat or honey for their cures or as presents for bringing the spirits of children to parents, payments to them are usually in those luxury goods that are the marks of wealth. It was readily observed that the beads and hardware which I gave as presents to the Tapirapé soon passed into the hands of shamans as payments for cures.

Payments to the shamans for curing the ill depend upon the seriousness of the illness and upon what the patient or his family has to offer. Frequently a shaman names his fee when his cure has been successful, asking for specific objects, for he knows full well what each family owns. Unsuccessful cures are never paid. For example, for the treatment of his sister's son and of his daughter, who were both sick at once, Kamairaho, a shaman himself, called three shamans and paid each the price that he asked. He paid one, Panteri, a machete and two strings of beads; to another, Urukumu, he gave an axe, a pocket knife, a pair of scissors, and five tail feathers of a red parrot; he gave only four strings of beads to Kamairai, who was considered a shaman of less power than the other two. Another young man with few possessions gave five arrows to a shaman who successfully treated his wife; still another paid the breast feathers from his parrot and four strings of beads to a shaman. When Txawaniuma killed a *paca*, the meat of which is highly prized by the Tapirapé, he gave some to his companion of the hunt and divided the rest between two shamans who had treated his small daughter successfully. Neither shaman had to ask for any specific gift or payment. People often complain to others about the high price they had to pay to a shaman, but generally they pay what is asked. "Stinginess" is a severe accusation among these people and to complain mildly about a high price is one way of announcing one's liberality.

Liberality is a necessary quality for a man of prestige. At the time of the annual harvest ceremonies, shamans and all other men of prestige must give gifts to all those who drink of *kauio*. Gift giving at this time proves their liberality and validates their prestige. At this time then there is a siphoning off of wealth from the shamans, but throughout the rest of the year fees and gifts channel it back into their hands.

### *Road to Shamanism*

Among the Tapirapé, *pančés* are essentially those people who dream much and who, in their dreams, travel widely in the supernatural world, achieving familiarity with the supernatural. At the time of my visit there were six men recognized as full-fledged shamans who were called upon to

treat the sick and to perform various ceremonials. Panteri and Urukumu, were the two clearly outstanding; these assumed leadership in shamanistic ceremonies and were the ones most frequently called for cures. Besides these six recognized shamans, there were four young men working to develop shamanistic power to gain recognition as shamans.

Within the memory of persons living in the village there had been three women shamans, but there were none, either practicing as recognized shamans or working as novices, during my visit. The women shamans were remembered as having been especially malevolent. They are supposed to dream more than men and work much harm to the people. People who recalled the women shamans explained that when they had sung in the annual ceremony of calling and fighting Thunder they had sung the part of the music usually sung by the shamans' wives and their husbands had sung the usual men shamans' parts. The women *pančės* had smoked and fallen in trances as the male shamans do. Nothing possible to men shamans appeared to be beyond the power of the women. None of them was described as masculine in behavior; on the contrary, they were described as "good wives," and one of them was remembered as small and particularly attractive.

Certain people regardless of sex are early recognized as future shamans because of their natural inclination to dream. Several informants, for example, told me that a young boy, an orphan, and therefore badly cared for, would certainly be a powerful shaman. He turned and talked in his sleep and had been known to cry during a nightmare. He remembered few of his dreams but did tell of seeing the spirit of his mother, and described an evil spirit which he met during a dream. One of the present powerful shamans is said to have been such a youngster with a predilection for dreaming. Such youngsters are nervous and sensitive; yet no distinctive personality traits were observed among adult shamans. Shamans are frequently emaciated and thin, attributable perhaps to their constant use of tobacco and the resulting nausea, and one shaman, now dead, was described by informants as a nervous ascetic interested only in the supernatural world.

Persons lacking this predilection for dreaming, but with aspirations to shamanism, may solicit dreams. Each year during the days of the dry season all young men who aspire to shamanism, even those who have shown potentialities during boyhood, gather each evening in the central plaza of the village to seek dreams. A novice sits upon the ground near a *pančė*, his mentor, and swallows smoke from his mentor's pipe until violent vomiting occurs. When the novices are too ill to hold the pipe, the shaman holds it for them, forcing them to continue "eating smoke." Generally the neophytes fall backwards unconscious and ill from the smoke; during this state they may dream. In any case, when they regain their senses, the pipe is again placed in their mouth until they fall backwards

ill and unconscious once more. The process may be repeated several times over a period of two or three hours. Later, when the novice retires to his hammock for the night, he may expect a dream.

Such sessions occur each night during the few weeks before the Thunder ceremony and a serious novice should attend all sessions. During this period he refrains from sexual intercourse because it will hinder his dreaming; he also refrains from bathing and so becomes grimy. He must not eat of those animals which "walk at night," such as the jaboti tortoise (*Testudo tabulata*) and the monkey, because he must be friendly with all creatures he may meet in his nocturnal dream travels. He should eat manioc flour, yams, pepper, and such bland meats as jacu, coati (*Nasua* sp.), peccary, mutum (*Crax* sp.), and chicken; of other foods he must eat sparingly or not at all. The novices are "tired" and "thin"; many do not continue after the first few nights because they "are lazy" or because "they are afraid." Campukwi, my informant, did not continue because he did not like the dirt, the nausea from tobacco, the lack of food, and the sexual continence.

Other novices, more successful and more persistent, do dream. At first they see smoky forms of ghosts and sometimes forest demons; they as yet do not know how to talk with such spirits. Usually, the first season or two during which a young man seeks dreams, he may expect mild dreams. After several seasons the novice may see dangerous forest demons in his unconscious states and he may talk with ghosts. Traditionally, young Tapirapé shamans become wild and uncontrollable when they have their first dangerous dreams. They are reported sometimes to stand up suddenly from their induced unconscious state and run wildly through the village, sometimes killing chickens, dogs, and parrots, or breaking pottery. Although no novices "ran" in this way during the 1940 training period, an informant described the state of a young shaman who "ran" several years ago. "He jumped up. He shouted and ran through the village. He carried a club in his hand (usually weapons are placed well out of reach). He killed two chickens and broke through the side of a house. He killed his brother's dog. All the women and children ran from the village, afraid. Finally, Maeumi grabbed him but he was strong and he hit Maeumi with a club and blood ran down Maeumi's face. Many men came and held him and Urukumu (his mentor) blew smoke over him," thus bringing him back to his senses. He had seen dangerous spirits and "was afraid," informants told me. This reaction is common for those who show potentialities toward shamanism.

The mere fact that the young shaman has several dangerous dreams does not make him a proved shaman. He must take part in the "fight" against the beings of Thunder, and by the side of his mentor he may attempt cures. If successful, he may be called now and again by people for cures. With a reputation for several cures and with continual dream-

ing, during which he has supernatural encounters, he builds up his reputation as a shaman over a period of many years. Panteri and Urukumu were about fifty years old when I visited them; informants gave no indication that their power was expected to decline with old age.

### *Conclusions*

It is apparent that in studying Tapirapé shamanism we are concerned with patterns which are part of a deep-seated New World shamanistic complex found widespread in both North and South America—from the Eskimo to the Ona and Yahgan of Tierra del Fuego. Among the Tupi-Guaraní peoples, however, shamanism has been an unusual factor in their cultural history. Dr. Alfred Métraux has shown that the numerous and distant migrations of Tupi-Guaraní tribes in post-Columbian times were frequently instigated by powerful shamans. In another study, Dr. Métraux emphasizes the extraordinary powers of the Tupinambá shamans and states that among the coastal Tupi of Brazil shamans at times held great secular powers. Senhor Curt Nimuendaju writes that the basic organization of the Apapocúva-Guaraní, before European contact, was the voluntary subordination to their shaman-chiefs and points out that the failure to recognize their power was the cause of repeated failures to unite the Guaraní in “aldeamentos.” My own recent work among the Tupi-speaking Guajajara of the Rio Pindaré of northeastern Brazil leads me to the opinion that, especially before European administrators gave them secular chiefs, Guajajara shamans exercised such strong religious and social controls over their people. The emphasis upon the role of the shaman in Tapirapé culture shows, therefore, a marked affinity with other Tupi-Guaraní peoples.

# 38 Religion and Society among the Kuria of East Africa<sup>1</sup>



M. J. Ruel

THE AUTHOR'S STATEMENT OF THE AIMS OF THE PAPER BELOW IS SO CLEAR and succinct as to make editorial comment superfluous. It may be noted, however, that in addition to the contrast suggested in the introduction to the previous selection (II:37) concerning the question of shamanism, there is also ample basis for comparing this and the preceding paper with regard to the relations between religious belief and social organization. This in turn suggests an extension of comparison and contrast to the articles that follow. The reader may attempt, for example, to evaluate the success of the analyst ethnographer in penetrating and conveying the indigenous meanings of religious symbols and rituals (II:39). One may also seek to compare this and various other essays (II:40 and 41) as attempts to interpret religion as a major sector of and clue to the larger value system of a culture.

<sup>1</sup> This paper was read at the Seminar, 'Religion in Africa', held at the Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh, April 1964. It is based upon fieldwork carried out between 1956 and 1958 under a research fellowship from the East African Institute of Social Research, Makerere College. The Kuria are a Bantu-speaking people, numbering some 100,000 persons, living west of the Masai, across the borders of Kenya and Tanzania.

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This paper attempts to answer two broad questions. Firstly, what is Kuria religion about? and secondly, what is the relationship between Kuria religious concepts and their social life and what is the place of ritual in this relationship? Neither of these are questions which Kuria would themselves ask—certainly in this form—but they are perhaps the two leading questions which an anthropologist must ask in examining the religious beliefs and ritual practice of another people. Much depends upon the answer to the first, for it is in terms of the answer that one is likely to establish the particular coherence or ‘integrity’ of a people’s beliefs, held existentially in the context of their own social life. The answer is relevant too to an issue which has concerned those writing on related peoples of the same area as the Kuria—the problem of the relation between magic and religious beliefs. Thus Wagner, writing on the Bantu Kavirondo, uses the undifferentiated category of ‘magico-religious’ belief. But what exactly is meant by this umbrella term, and does it not itself obfuscate what it seeks to define? The second question considered—the relationship between Kuria religious concepts and their social life—is a continuation of the first in relation to their very elaborate and, in one sense, autonomous system of ritual based in particular on a complex sequence of rites of passage. These rites are a very striking feature of Kuria culture. It is, I think, by considering them in this double context—as expressing religious values on the one hand while controlling social behaviour on the other—that these rites are most fully understood.

### *Cosmological Beliefs and Categories of the Supernatural*

Kuria cosmological belief is not the subject of very elaborate statement or myth. A unique divinity, usually referred to as the Sun, *Irioba*, but sometimes by the name Enokwe, is said to have created the world and all that it contains. The act of creation is seen as one of ordering, characterizing, or designing, and not simply of making. One of the words frequently used to describe the Sun’s action (-ᵐᵐᵐᵐᵐ) is also used, for example, to describe the painting of a pattern on a shield; its general meaning is to ‘describe a figure’ to ‘design’ and, by extension, to ‘write’. The Sun as Creator (or ‘Designer’, *Keᵐᵐᵐᵐᵐ*, as Kuria say) is associated with the sun in the sky, although the Kuria term for the sun is wider in reference than its English translation: *irioba* refers firstly to the sun but also to the sky and in a general sense to ‘the above’. Statements about the Sun as divinity are made analogically by reference to the sun in the sky. Thus the Sun is said to be single and all-pervasive, the same sun shining on all people, tribes, and races. The concept of the sun as the ultimate and single originator is also expressed in descent terms: the Sun is spoken of as the original progenitor (*omosemori*) or is referred to simply as ‘the An-

cestor' (*omokoro oora*, literally 'that ancestor [that we have been speaking about]').

Besides being described as the unique originator or designer of the world, the Sun is also seen as the source of all prosperity and life. Analogy would seem also to be entailed here although its terms are blurred and are perhaps not immediately referable to concrete experience. As the Sun is common to all, so each person has access to it, or, as Kuria say, his own 'sun'. A person's 'sun' (*irioba reomonto*) is cited as the ultimate explanation of his fortune or misfortune in life, whether this concerns a quite incidental matter—the 'good luck' of finding a coin on a path—or whether the circumstances are those in which basic Kuria values are involved; someone with a large and prosperous homestead, who has fulfilled all his family duties and who has himself advanced to become a ritual elder, is essentially someone whose 'sun is good'. 'Sun gives people life.' (*Rioba akoha banto obohoro*.)

Apart from this single concept of the Sun, Kuria distinguish three categories of supernatural being: 'sprites' (*amasambo*), 'ancestors' (*abakoro*), and 'ghosts' (*ibihui*). Each of these categories emanates from persons at one time alive and they are distinguished by their present relationship to the living. The 'ancestors' are the dead, who are still remembered by the living and who are represented through them, especially through their own descendants. Kuria see the giving of the names of the dead as the main way in which this relationship is maintained: the dead ancestors live on through those who bear their names among the living, and it is incumbent upon present descendants through both female and male lines to name their children after their dead forebears. The 'social personality' of the ancestors is thus kept alive by the living and it is this which distinguishes them from other categories of supernatural being; but there is no cult of particular ancestors. 'Sprites' on the other hand are described as entities which 'are not seen' and 'are not known': they are believed to have been originally living persons but are not now individually remembered; they are beings who have, as it were, become detached from society. Whereas Kuria speak of ancestors inhabiting animals and coming in animal guise (as snakes, beetles, &c.) to visit the living in their homesteads, the 'sprites' are commonly associated with other external, natural features—springs, rocks, trees, groves—and they are believed to attack the living when the latter encounter them there. Again, whereas the ancestors are described as well disposed towards the living, sprites are generally described as 'bad' or malevolent, the cause of various abnormal illnesses, especially madness, hallucinations, and similar aberrations. In fact this distinction is not altogether consistent with the accounts offered of particular cases: in many such cases ancestors are named as the cause of illness or misfortune and in this sense cause harm, while on the other hand diviners and dream-prophets are often said to derive their (beneficial) supernatural powers from sprites. The assumed categorical difference in

the 'goodness' of the two orders of being may, however, be seen to emerge from their ascribed relationship to the society of the living: the ancestors are part of the social order and thus in accord with the living; the sprites are believed to be outside it and are thus antagonistic to the living, the cause of mischief and aberrance. In some circumstances sprites are believed to attack the living, in particular causing barrenness to women, in order that they may be brought back into society: a ritual is performed in which the sprite is 'fetched' from the place 'outside' where it was believed to be encountered and 'brought home' (*-renta ka*) to the homestead of the person attacked, and a promise is made to name any future child after it.

Thus, the distinction between 'sprites' and 'ancestors' is not completely clear-cut and at one level there is interchange and identification between the two categories. Kuria describe sprites as beings that were once ancestors and are now socially forgotten; 'their names are no longer given'. On the other hand, as the type example cited above shows, a sprite may be individually identified and 'resocialized'; the sprite becomes then a kind of ancestor. This 'ancestor', *omokoro*, is not, however, associated with a particular descent group, as other ancestors are, but is 'free' or potentially common to all, the one name being found throughout Kuria country. There are some dozen identified sprites or type ancestors of this kind recognized by Kuria. In the hierarchy of Kuria concepts they stand closer to the Sun, the original Ancestor, than do the other sprites or (recent) ancestors. According to their individual attributes they can either be classed as 'things of the Sun' (i.e. particular materializations of the Sun, associated among other things with the appearances of the stick-insect, tortoise, and a certain snake) or they describe the generalized personality of neighbouring peoples, *Muikwabe*, *Mugaya*, *Mugusuhi*, 'Masai-person', 'Luo-person', 'Gusii-person' and the rest (the same names as in other contexts would stand for these peoples' original ancestors).

The third category of supernatural being, 'ghosts', is more restricted in its range. Characteristically and most commonly, a 'ghost' is someone who has been killed in fighting and who now comes to cause harm to his killer or the latter's descendants. In the past a certain ritual was performed after a homicide in fighting specifically in order to divert the attention of the ghost. This, however, is not the only source of ghostly attack. A lover who has been jilted by his sweetheart and later dies may return, it is believed, to cause her barrenness in a later marriage to another man. During the long period of their ritual seclusion, initiants (who are debarred from a great many 'normal' activities such as sleeping on a bed, cultivation, eating with others, and if they die are not buried in a grave but are 'discarded') are also described as 'ghosts'. There is a common element here of social unrelatedness but perhaps even more clearly the 'ghost' is someone with a precarious posterity, someone whose life is unfulfilled, cut short, or made abortive.

All these supernatural concepts of the Kuria imply a certain ordering



of the natural and social world and take their significance from their relationship to this order: the Sun as originator or designer; the ancestors as 'personalities' maintained by the living and thus assimilated to the social order; sprites as beings out of relation with the society of the living but remaining at large in the natural world; ghosts as revengeful dead whose life has been made abortive.

The supernatural sanctions which may be used by the living, the sanctions of cursing (*-kumuma*), blessing (*-kuha*) and invocation (*-ita-biria*), similarly emanate from the position which a person holds within the social order, or (in the case of invocation) from a ritual elder's combined social and ritual status. The supernatural sanction which Kuria most fear, however, is the automatic and self-returning sanction of *iriraga*, which is perhaps the nearest concept which the Kuria have to moral 'sin'. *Iriraga* arises from some very severe transgression of moral norms; the characteristic example given is abuse of one's own parents. Kuria believe that such an act will bring about its own retribution by returning on the offender in later years, especially as an act committed against him by his own children. It is, as it were, a wrong-doing that has become embedded in ongoing social relationships, the automatic retribution for transgression against the most important norms maintaining them. The concept of *iriraga* implies very strongly the notion of a given order, sin as a dis-ordering of relations. More strongly, however, than in all the 'cosmological' concepts that have been discussed here, the idea of order and particularly of ordered growth is fundamental to Kuria ritual.

### *Ritual*

Kuria could not be said to be a highly 'religious' people. They do not, on the whole, run to moral or supernatural explanations for events, and the concepts we have been considering, although they are certainly used, do not bulk large in everyday life. On the other hand, Kuria could be said to be a ritualistic people; ritual actions and requirements, feasts and celebrations, figure very large in their life and in the planning of future activities. They speak of themselves as 'doers of ritual', *abakora nyangi*, and compare themselves according to this criterion with other peoples having or not having a similar ritual complex. To speak of something as 'ritual', *inyangi*, is to place it in a special category, not susceptible to ordinary criteria or reasoning. To refer to an action as rejected or 'taboo', *mugiro*, is to give sufficient reason for its avoidance. Both of these concepts when applied to forms of behaviour have a quality of final explanation.

Kuria rituals, *icinyangi*, may be divided into two double categories, rites of circumstance and rites of passage, each of these being further subdivided into individual and communal rites.

The rites of circumstance are performed on occasions of illness, misfortune, or untoward happening and are intended to assuage, appease, restore, or cleanse: their general purpose is to right what was wrong, to render propitious what was unpropitious. They include the actions of blessing (*-kuha*) and of sacrifice (*-mwensa*), the latter made to ancestors, to identified sprites, and to the Sun; but they also include actions in which none of these supernatural beings is invoked. These are cleansing or restoring rites (*-irabia*, *-sonsora*) which for the most part are centred on the use of the chyme (stomach contents) of cattle, goats, or sheep, which is touched by or rubbed upon persons who have been made violable to injury or harm, or is scattered on the place or object made similarly unpropitious. Much of the death ritual comes within this category of a 'rite of circumstance' rather than that of a 'rite of passage'. (Kuria do not regard death as a culmination, the end of a sequence; it may come at any time and its coming is either an interruption of an uncompleted life or irrelevant to a completed one.) The main action in the death ritual, cited here as for Renchoka province, is the 'cleansing' (*-irabia*) after the fourth or fifth day; all the relatives, friends, and neighbours of the deceased come then to touch the chyme of a cow or goat that has been killed in the homestead and thus rid themselves and the homestead of the death, *uruku*. A similar action is taken at the conclusion of a feud between descent groups after a homicide when the two parties to the feud come to touch or rub themselves with the chyme of a slaughtered goat, and thus restore relations between them. Again, chyme is very generally used to restore the situation after a transgression or 'taboo' has been committed: if a person dies on his (or her) bed (a place of procreation, of life, and of the ancestors); if the leg of the bed breaks while someone is in it; if a grandchild by a daughter climbs on the grandfather's bed before a grandchild by a son does so; if mother and married daughter meet on the path between their homesteads, each going to visit the other; if the homestead head falls to the ground in his own cattle corral; if any object or utensil which is being used during a ritual breaks; in all these circumstances (and I have named only a few, almost at random) a goat, or sometimes a sheep, must be killed and its chyme used to restore what has been made violable, or, in Steiner's term, 'dangerous'.

Rites of circumstance for the community are normally performed on behalf of the major political community, the province, and parallel in their purpose the individual rites already described. These rites are performed in certain 'sacred places' possessed by each province. Chyme figure also in these communal rituals, being used to 'cleanse' or 'restore' the 'outside'—i.e. the natural growth of the farms. In this situation, moreover, human life may take the place of animal life represented in chyme: in Butimbaru province in times of extreme natural disaster a man was taken and trampled upon by its ritual representatives until excreta and stomach

contents emerged from his anus; these were then taken and scattered on the farms of the province in the same way as animal chyme was used in other circumstances. There is also a widespread popular belief that after a death by drowning there will be a rich harvest.

The emphasis in Kuria ritual lies, however, less on these individual and communal rites of circumstances, important as they are, than on the rites of passage. These are a sequence of ceremonies that mark not so much a person's progress through life as his progress in establishing a family and founding a descent line. The most important of the ceremonies are: initiation (*-saara*) which gives adult status and in particular the right to bear or beget a child; there follows the complex of marriage ceremonies, including either then or later 'the woman's *isubo*', a bride's fertility ceremony; there is then (in a few cases before) the first pregnancy rite (*-goota irikoba*); and finally after many years when a man's family is fully established, usually when he and his wife are grandparents, the culminating and most important ceremony of all, that of ritual elderhood, *isubo yomogaaka*. These individual rites of passage have their counterpart in the communal rites of passage performed for each generation of persons or 'generation class' (*irikora*) within a province, of which the two most important rites mark the time when the men of a generation are setting up their own homesteads and later when they 'retire' to make way for their sons. I have referred to these communal rites of passage in a published account of Kuria generation classes (*Africa*, xxxii, January 1962) and do not consequently consider them further here, although they are relevant to my subject and theme.

There are three notable features to the individual rites of passage. Firstly, these concern equally men and women. There is indeed a certain Darby and Joan air to much of Kuria ritual, the two sexes either sharing in the same ceremony or parallel ceremonies being performed for them, a feature which finds its culmination in the ritual elderhood ceremony, where a man and his wife are both equally involved and perform much of the ceremony as partners. Secondly, each of these ceremonies is associated with a transition in age- and its linked kinship-status: childhood to adulthood (with its implications of marriage and begetting children); marriage and incipient parenthood; finally the achievement of full elderhood or family headship, both for the man, the *omogaaka*, and the woman, the *umukungu*. Thirdly, and arising immediately from this latter feature, these rites of passage, although having primary reference to one person or a married couple, also involve and reflect on the status of other lineal and collateral kin. The sequence of the ceremonies is in fact interlocking: after a person's own initiation, marriage, and rite of first pregnancy, he (or she) looks forward to the initiation of his or her first-born, to the marriage of a son's wife, and to the birth of grandchildren; and it is then at this point, when the same sequence has been repeated in the succeeding generation

but with implications for the parent's own status, that the ritual initiative returns to the parent and the final 'locking' ceremony of ritual elderhood is performed. This interlocking or due sequence of ceremonies is also important in relation to collateral kin. Thus, all the main ceremonies—initiation, marriage, and ritual elderhood—must be performed according to seniority within the family, firstly by seniority of 'houses' or matrifamily units within the homestead, and secondly by seniority within the matrifamily. This involves no real problem concerning initiation and marriage but it very frequently creates difficulties in the performance of ritual elderhood, since brothers reach this degree of social maturity at different times and are not all equally able to undertake the costly and elaborate elderhood ceremony. Moreover, because of an early death or because of continual postponement of the ceremony a man (or a junior wife) may die without the ceremony being performed. The rule of due sequence is, however, still maintained: if a man or woman has descendants the elderhood ceremony must still be performed in surrogate, even after their death, before a man's junior siblings, his sons, or a wife's sons, can proceed to perform their own elderhood ceremony. The fabric of kinship relations is woven and its strands held in place perhaps more directly by the sequence of rites of passage than by the physiological fact of procreation itself.

It is impossible to say anything here in detail about the particular forms of the ceremonies. In general their aims are to acquire positive virtue for the participants; they are not simply negative or restorative, the warding off of mischance or the righting of what has gone wrong. Certain actions, objects, and themes reappear in all the ceremonies. In the two *isubo* ceremonies a number of 'cameo' actions reflecting common social situations are performed, accompanied by set songs of comment. In all the ceremonies actions indicating entry into a new status are performed: cutting the hair, washing, feeding 'for the first time', &c. In all ceremonies involving women certain sticks are used which are initially given to a woman at her first pregnancy ceremony and which may include a decorated staff made for her at her initiation; these are later added to at her husband's elderhood ceremony and they form a kind of ritual baton which she should carry at her own or her children's rites of passage or at any ceremony at which she officiates. The theme of strengthening or 'stablishing' (*-arama*)<sup>2</sup> is a constant one. Two of the sticks just mentioned should be

<sup>2</sup> The verb *-arama* is used only in ritual contexts and lacks a 'secular' meaning other than as a name of a tree. It is a difficult word to translate directly but would seem in these contexts to carry the general sense of 'making stable' or 'consolidating' the main ritual action already performed. The English word 'stablish' with its particular suggestion of making stable or supporting something already in existence (cf. *O.E.D.* definitions) provides a useful equivalent and one whose archaic and limited contextual use in religious worship is not inappropriate to the Kuria term.

(for Renchoka province) from a tree of the *Combretum* species, which is known as *omcorama* 'that which stablishes'; it reappears again and again in these rituals and Kuria refer to it as 'the tree (or wood) which does ritual'. The main protagonist or protagonists of most of the rituals should be accompanied by a child (or children) of the same sex who carries out the same formal actions as the older protagonist, such as washing, eating, sitting, or sleeping on the bed: the child supports the person for whom the ritual is performed and represents a possible 'follower-on' in a later generation; the child is described as the 'stablisher', *omcoramia*. Again, each ceremony is normally followed by a period of ritual seclusion, four days for a woman, five for a man, which is called the period of 'stablishing' (-*arama*).

Even in these few examples, the themes of due order and sequence are apparent. They reach their most explicit symbolic formulation in one of the central actions of the elderhood ceremony, when, on the evening of the second day of the main sequence of (Renchoka) ceremonies, the elder and his wife, the ritual officiant and his wife, and the two child 'stablishers' pass out of the homestead of the elder and go to a preselected tree (of the fig species) nearby; the tree is circled five times by the party and blessed by them before they return to the homestead. A ritual link is in this way established between the elder and the fig-tree, between the ramifying descent line of the elder and the growth and branching of the tree. Kuria are quite explicit about the analogy implied here. Although no further action need ever be made at the tree—it does not become a shrine or place of sacrifice—it is forbidden, 'taboo', to cut or mutilate it, which it is believed would bring misfortune to the elder or his descendants; should this occur by accident, the offender must bring a goat and the chyme of the goat is scattered on the tree. This symbolic linking of social and natural growth is not unique in the Kuria ritual complex. All the sacred places of a province are in, or consist of, groves in which unhampered growth is allowed to trees and bushes: Kuria are again explicit that the social continuity of a province is represented in and by these groves. In a way very similar to the link established between tree and elder in the individual rite of passage, the communal rites of passage also establish or maintain a link between a tree and each generation class in a province, or between a tree and each cycle of generation classes there.

Performance of the elderhood ceremony gives a man certain privileges: the right to a certain share of meat, to occupy a certain position at a beer-party, to wear an ornament in his distended ear-lobe, to carry his beer-tube in a special container, and others. The most important quality conferred, however, is the ability to perform ritual itself, notably to carry out the commonest of all ritual acts, that of 'opening' (-*tora*) the stomach of a cow, sheep or goat that has been ritually killed, and of simi-

larly 'opening' a beer-pot that is part of a ritual festival.<sup>3</sup> Further, any ritual use of chyme must be made by an *umusubi*, a ritual elder. The culminating individual rite of passage thus gives command over the performance of ritual itself. Having himself become assimilated to the order of growth, a ritual elder now acts as its mediator for others.

The ordered development which Kuria ritual seeks to achieve by positive means, is sought to be maintained negatively and indirectly by the host of Kuria taboos, *imigiro*, literally 'rejections' (from *-gira*, to reject, jilt, turn away from). The most strenuous of these relate to the observance of the ritual sequence itself: above all it is forbidden to bear or beget a child before initiation or to claim privileges or to perform rites (such as that of 'opening' the paunch of a cow) in advance of one's status. Such a person is described as an *irikumeene* and threatens misfortune not only to himself and his (or her) own homestead, but also to all others in whose ritual he may share. A girl who conceives before initiation should be driven from the province; cattle cannot be accepted for her bridewealth, and certainly could not be used again in another bridewealth. Nowadays Christians who have not performed the later rites of passage are similarly classed as *amakumeene*, dangerous abnormalities, and are excluded from the equivalent ritual of traditional Kuria. This suggestion of pollution or 'danger', the opening of the way to potential disorder and misfortune, underlies a great number of the taboos, a few of which have already been noted. They point out the path of continuity and prosperity by flagging the points at which a possible departure may occur.

### *The Aims of Ritual and Kuria Ideals*

The idea of ordered growth that is implicit in Kuria supernatural concepts and in their ritual practice is further expressed directly by Kuria when discussing the purpose of ritual and in referring to basic ideals. Central to all Kuria values, the assumed aim of every person, man or woman, is to establish a family and leave descendants. This ideal is of course common to many African societies; for Kuria it has a particular insistence and is worked out very fully in their kinship organization and institutions of marriage. In the ultimate view it is this ideal which all Kuria ritual seeks to achieve for its protagonists. Inversely, the ultimate negative sanction, which is believed to follow from most of the tabooed actions, is the 'ex-

<sup>3</sup> The action of *-tora* is one of breaking through or making a hole into, or out of, an enclosed space. I have earlier used the more literal translation of 'piercing' for the word and have discussed the rite under this title in the Conference Proceedings of the East African Institute of Social Research, summer 1958. 'Opening' now seems to me to be a better translation, being less ambiguous and more directly in the sense of the Kuria word.

tion' or 'shutting off' of a person's family (i.e. his *umugi*, or 'homestead').

As we have seen, establishing a family is not achieved suddenly but is done gradually and by phases. A Kuria reaches social maturity gradually, and this depends almost entirely on his family status. The term *omonto mokoro*, and 'adult' or 'socially mature' person, is used relatively to describe the 'reaching' or achievement of any of a number of phases of development: puberty, initiation, marriage, parenthood, and finally elderhood. The short answer to the question why any rite of passage is performed is that it makes its protagonist 'a mature person': *abaaye monto mokoro*, 'he has become mature' (or 'fully grown'). This comment can be made after any of the rites of passage (including the initiation and marriage of the first-born) but it applies most completely after the ceremony of ritual elderhood. This marks the culmination of social maturity: 'one can then die', Kuria commonly remark. We should note here that the term earlier translated as 'ancestors', *abakoro*, is the nominal form of the adjective now translated as 'adult', 'socially mature', or 'fully grown'. In understanding this correspondence there is some danger in projecting our own ideas of 'life after death', which Kuria do not share, on to Kuria concepts. Ancestorhood is not an extension after death of a social maturity acquired during a person's life, for a person may die before reaching full social maturity as a ritual elder and this will not debar him from becoming an 'ancestor', *omokoro*. The correspondence would seem to be more immediate and direct: as social maturity during a person's lifetime is his gradual assimilation to a social ideal, his becoming part of a certain ordering of relations, so in death the ancestors are those who are assimilated, who are 'remembered' socially, who are part of the social order.

Wealth (*obwome*) and life or well-being (*oboboro*) are both qualities sought for in Kuria ritual. The conditions of wealth and well-being are named explicitly in the invocations made during initiation and ritual elderhood, when a list of 'things coming to the homestead' is given: sons and daughters, heifers and bullocks, he-goats and she-goats, a full and flowing granary, and so on. Wealth and well-being are also symbolized in many of the objects and actions of the rituals, as, for example, in the woman's *isubo* of Renchoka, when a plant already growing or especially placed by the granaries surrounding a homestead is touched by the protagonist, 'stablisher', and two older women, each saying in turn 'plant of wealth, you are taken by the daughter of——' (each citing her own descent praise-name). The quality of life or well-being would seem also to be symbolized in chyme; the touching or scattering of chyme always carries the implication of making well, rendering whole, or giving life to. Peace and good order, *omorembe*, are also qualities sought in and through Kuria rituals: fighting, noise, or any disturbance is forbidden while a rite is being carried out; various woods and plants are used to ensure peace;

and in a number of rituals it is stipulated that certain actions be performed by a quiet or gentle man (*omohaabu*).

The quality pre-eminently sought through the performance of the rites of passage and which is also one of the main ideals in the growth to social maturity is, however, what Kuria speak of as *oboronge*, 'straightness'. In everyday speech and in invocations, a family that is well established, in the well-being and fulfilled status of its members as much as in size or wealth, is said to 'stand well' or to 'stand straight'. One Kuria whom I knew very well always expressed a desire that his children or grandchildren should 'grow *sawasarwa*', should grow 'just so' (the Swahili word being used). The same idea is also expressed in a gesture which indicates a single, undeviating course ahead. *Oboronge* sums up this quality of ordered extension, of regularity, of straightness ahead. In a ritual context an *omoronge*, 'a straight person', is a man who has achieved this regular growth in his family with each point of growth thriving: his senior wife must still be alive and also his eldest child. Such a man, whether or not he is wealthy or prosperous in more material terms, is sought after to act as officiant in the ritual elderhood ceremony, and is also required to perform the main actions of blessing the generation classes in the communal rites of passage. Our own concept of a descent 'line' comes very close to the Kuria ideal of *oboronge*, although Kuria themselves conceptualize descent rather as an opening or way out: two of the commonest terms for patrilineal descent groups or descent lines are 'doorway' (*egesaku*) and 'corral gateway' (*ikihita*), and the 'opening' of the enclosed paunch of a cow containing chyme, as well as other 'opening' actions, are as we have noted the main actions reserved for performance by ritual elders.

We reach here a tight cluster of ideas and symbolic actions which any attempt to formulate precisely seems almost of necessity to distort. The ideas of life, well being, and 'straightness' are involved but there is also a correspondence sought between the ordered growth of natural things and that of people in society, a correspondence which is focused in the status of ritual elder and which is perhaps most clearly symbolized in the ritual linking of the elder and his descent line to the ordered growth of a tree.

### *Themes of Kuria Religion*

To return now to the general questions posed at the beginning of the paper: if one were to summarize the concern of Kuria religion it could be said to be the relationship between people and the life or well-being given by the Sun, figuring Deity; or, more directly, the relationship between people and ordered growth, *oboronge*.

The values and concepts of Kuria religion are notably impersonal.



In only a few contexts is the Sun personalized (as Ancestor, or 'giver' of life, although even here barely); for the most part the Sun is not spoken of as a person but only as a force or quality. The providence associated with the Sun is for Kuria quite impersonal. There is no ascription of intention or will to the Sun (although the Sun is said to 'watch over all'); pious statements concerning 'God's will' and its necessary acceptance by human beings are completely alien to the Kuria view of the world. Their concept of a 'person's sun' comes far closer to our own belief in an impersonal 'luck' that someone may or may not possess than any idea of a personal or guiding providence.

Nevertheless, the concept of the Sun as unique divinity, the originator of the ordered world, and the continuing giver of life, is clearly a unifying concept, although sometimes a vague and uncertain one, to which most other Kuria beliefs can ultimately be referred. Fundamentally and most obviously the Sun reigns over the quality of ordered growth. This is true both of the natural growth of the farms, plants and trees and—in Kuria eyes—of societal growth, the reaching of maturity within the social order. A man whose family is established and who has completed his elderhood ceremony is pre-eminently someone whose 'sun is good', or, as we sometimes say, on whom 'the sun shines well'. Kuria religion is concerned with the cultivation of ordered growth. It comes perhaps closer to the idea of a 'natural religion' current in the eighteenth century than to traditional, theistic Christianity: the emphasis is rather on God's works, the action of God in the world, than on faith or relationship with him. Kuria seek the qualities which they believe emanate from the Sun much as a farmer grows his crops: all depends upon timing, upon the correct use of the material means available, upon doing the right thing in the right way.

The emphasis given to ritual in Kuria culture is consistent with this view, as also is the impersonality of much of the ritual practice. Kuria scatter chyme with the attitude of a farmer sowing seed (and on occasions they do put chyme with their seed). One might speak of this action as 'magical' and the whole complex of belief we have been considering as 'magico-religious', but neither terms are I think very helpful, for they imply a mysticism, a belief in 'unknown forces' which is quite alien to Kuria thought. 'Life', 'wealth', and 'straightness' are to Kuria as definite and as 'knowable' as the principle of gravity to an engineering scientist. All are qualities or principles at large in the world and associated with its ordered arrangement: these are the principles which are discerned by Kuria religious philosophy, and which Kuria ritual seeks to assimilate to human activities. Among their religious concepts it is indeed those which are ascribed personality and are believed to emanate from people—the 'sprites' and 'ancestors'—which are least certain in their activities and,

according to their own distance from the social order, are used to account for abnormalities such as madness, or the 'mystical' abilities of diviners and prophets.

One of the main themes expressed in the symbolism of Kuria ritual is the linking of the ordered growth in nature with ordered growth in society. This is by no means an uncommon theme in East African religions; it would seem to be present in the institutions of 'divine kingship' among the Nilotes and some of the Interlacustrine Bantu as well as in such institutions as the *mugwe* of the Meru and the cult of the 'heroes' or divine kingship of the Nyakyusa. In both of the latter cases there is a ritual association of persons according to their position in society with trees, and in both cases also the idea of continuing growth would seem to be central to the institution: Fr. Bernardi reports Meru as affirming that 'the house of the Mugwe cannot come to an end', literally that it 'always grows'; and in the ritual killing of the Nyakyusa divine kings and their (less divine) chiefs the parts of the body first taken from them and preserved are the parts of continuing (and automatic) growth, the nails and hair.

Kuria social values and principles of social grouping are clearly involved in their religious concepts. These concepts are not, however, mere projections of a social order—another way of apprehending society. If they were, it would be very odd, for example, to identify an elder's lineage with a tree and then *not* make this the focus of collective ceremony. The answer is of course that while descent or the descent line—'straightness'—is an important concept in their religious thought and practice, their lineage system as a system of social groups is not represented there: there is no 'ancestor cult' and the ancestors identified in religious practice are rarely the apical ancestors of established descent groups.

One way of defining religion is as a 'truth system', the inter-connected set of values to which are ascribed ultimate validity. If we accept this as a definition of Kuria religion (or 'philosophy', as this belief system could also be called) we must as a matter of course expect these values to be reflected in, and themselves to reflect, their society and social life as part of the world in which they live. The point here is not that there is any correspondence between 'religion' and 'society', as though they were separate and distinct entities, but that what in some contexts we call 'religious' and what in other contexts we call 'social' values are continuous with each other, and in some cases are identical. It is the contexts themselves which must be distinguished. Thus the Kuria idea of establishing a family and leaving descendants may be regarded as a religiously validated principle consistent with the importance ascribed to ordered growth, or it may be regarded as a simple social norm, having certain consequences for the organization of society or itself a consequence of that organization. Kuria ritual belongs to both contexts: it at once symbolizes religious

values but also has consequences for social behaviour and the patterning of society. The special importance of the very elaborate ritual sequence, centred on the individual and communal rites of passage, is that what is symbolized by the ritual is also created through its performance. There is no 'magic' here other than the magic of enacted values. Kuria rituals cannot confer life or prosperity but they can and do confer ordered growth, the 'straightness' of ordered relations in a continuing society.

## 39 Ritual Man in Africa



Robin Horton

IN WRITING THESE BRIEF INTRODUCTIONS TO THE ARTICLES THE EDITOR SERVES a variety of purposes, not always consistently. Sometimes he explains or justifies a particular choice; at other times he uses the opportunity to slip in a criticism; on still other occasions he underlines a point he considers of particular significance. With regard to the following selection the editor has three comments.

Robin Horton's article is a brilliant demonstration, if one is needed, of the fact that the philosophical simplicity of primitive religion is probably more to be attributed to the simplicity of the analytical and descriptive treatment it has received than accepted as a valid characterization. In Horton's critique of Victor Turner's attempt to penetrate and comprehend Ndembu religion, whatever else is accomplished, the intellectual content of Ndembu belief is displayed so as to reveal its intricate structure and complex figuration.

Horton also presents us in a straightforward way with the necessity of dealing with ideology comprehensively, instead of through dissection into mutually exclusive and sterile components labeled religion, magic, science, values and cosmology. That there may be conflicts among the be-

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lief subsystems comprising these different rubrics is only a better reason for treating them in their interaction.

Finally, Robin Horton sometimes offers a viewpoint so alien to the editor's thought that Ndembu seems closer and, by contrast, easier to comprehend. The notion, for example, that one wishing to analyze an alien religion has an advantage if he begins by being himself a believer in some religion, is certainly open to question. Indeed, Horton's main faulting of Turner seems stimulated by the kinds of assumptions Turner has brought with him out of his own religious beliefs. One may agree with Horton or not; there is much to think about in his article.

This paper starts with a critique of two recent essays on African religion—Professor Max Gluckman's essay 'Les Rites de Passage', and Dr. V. W. Turner's *Chihamba: the White Spirit*. Though the first is a generalized interpretation of African rituals, and the second a close study of one rite in a particular culture, the two make an interesting comparison. First of all, they are inspired by strongly contrasted theoretical premisses. Secondly, one represents a well-established approach to the study of ritual, while the other includes a powerful objection to this approach. Thirdly, the two essays exhibit a polarity of attitude which I suspect has a wider currency both in Social Anthropology and in Comparative Religion. In what follows, I shall argue that the polarization of thought suggested by these two essays is basically unhelpful to the study of African religions; and I shall go on and suggest an approach which seems to me a fruitful middle way into the subject.

Gluckman's essay takes as its point of departure an appraisal of Van Gennep's work on *rites de passage*—i.e. those rituals which in pre-industrial societies accompany major changes of role and status. Gluckman praises Van Gennep for his analysis of the mechanism of such rites, and for his exposition of the way in which they help to make role changes easier for all those involved. But, he says, Van Gennep gives no adequate explanation of why *rites de passage* are so common in 'tribal societies', and so rare in modern industrial states. Van Gennep simply begs the question by saying that, to the semi-civilized mind, no act is entirely free from the sacred. According to Gluckman, it would in fact have been impossible for him to have provided an explanation: for he lacked the consistent vision of social relations essential to such a task. Gluckman sets out to make up for the deficiency which he sees in his predecessor's work. He contrasts his own approach, which sees rituals primarily 'in terms of social structure', with the older approach of Van Gennep, Tylor, and Frazer, who are said to have treated rituals 'as the fruits of mental processes and ideas'. He considers this a definite advance on that of the older writers, whom he finds boring and non-modern in their approach, and sets himself two closely related questions to answer. Why are so many role-transi-

tions in 'tribal society' accompanied by rituals? And why, in so many of the rituals of this type of society, are the participants required to act in ways that typify their most important secular roles? Each of these questions has its corollary *vis-à-vis* modern industrial society: i.e. why, in the latter, are role-transitions not so often accompanied by rituals? And why, in such rituals as occur, do people not act in ways that typify their secular roles?

In modern industrial society, as Gluckman points out, people tend to play their various roles with different partners in different places; and these circumstances obviate the need for any additional devices designed to prevent confusion of roles. In 'tribal society', on the other hand, people tend to play several different roles with the same partners in the same setting: hence there is a need for role-segregating devices of which ritual, together with other types of ceremonial, is one.

Again, because people play several roles with the same partners, breach of norms or conflict in one role-context readily spreads into other contexts and so leads to widespread social disturbance. Mystical forces are invoked as sanctions for moral norms because of these very serious implications of their breach: hence ritual addressed to such forces is a constant accompaniment of occasions on which the norms governing particular roles are stated. Yet again, because conflict in one role-context can have such widespread repercussions, it must be periodically checked and its inevitability concealed; and here too ritual comes in handy.

Finally, the fact that breach or conflict in one role-context may cause widespread social disturbance, and that such disturbance may even affect the relations between a community and its environment, leads to the belief that there is a causal linkage between the social and the natural order; and this linkage is stated in mystical terms. Hence the beneficence of nature is assured by ceremonials in which people symbolize adherence to the norms governing their secular roles. Hence, too, such ceremonials inevitably contain a reference to mystical forces.

How successful is Gluckman's attempt to tackle the problems left unsolved by Van Gennep? On the one hand, his characterization of the differences in role-organization between tribal and industrial societies seems definitely illuminating. So too does his thesis that a concern for harmonious social life in tribal societies must give rise to a host of role-segregating and role-defining devices which are unnecessary in industrial society. On the other hand, though ritual can be pressed into the service of role-definition and role-segregation, there is surely more to it than this. Most African ritual is directed to entities that are inaccessible to normal observation and are in addition personal beings. To many people these properties present the central problem of Comparative Religion. Why, in tribal societies especially, should there be constant resort to entities of *this kind* in every conceivable human predicament? And why, coming back

to Gluckman, should it be entities *of this kind* that are invoked on so many occasions when there is a transition or affirmation of important roles? If one grants that all human populations spend a certain amount of ingenuity on securing harmony in their social life, it follows that difficulties in maintaining harmony, which Gluckman shows to be inherent in the role-organization of 'tribal societies', will evoke a multitude of counteractive responses. But there is nothing to show that the elaboration of ritual is the only effective kind of response, or indeed that the required counteractive functions could not be discharged by a whole assortment of activities and institutions other than ritual. In fact, there is nothing in the essence of ritual which makes it a particularly obvious solution to the problem of maintaining harmony in tribal societies: for sectional and individual rites abound in African communities, and they are concerned as much with disruption as with harmony. Finally, why should it be entities with the characteristic properties of 'the mystical' that are invoked as a link between fluctuations of the social order and fluctuations of nature? Why should not people just assume a direct and unmediated link between the one and the other—as when a man believes that walking under a ladder is likely to be followed by misfortune? For the anthropologist who asks questions of this kind, Gluckman's essay is likely to bring no stilling of curiosity.<sup>1</sup>

Some indication of why Gluckman does not attempt to answer questions of this sort comes from the introductory paragraphs of his essay. Here, as we have seen, he not only contrasts the nineteenth-century view of rituals as 'the fruits of mental processes and ideas' with the modern view which sees them 'in terms of social relations'. He goes on to assert that modern minds are bored by the nineteenth-century approach. What this seems to mean is that while Van Gennep, Tylor, Frazer, and other nineteenth-century writers treated religious beliefs as serious attempts to account for the world and its workings, those of their modern successors who follow Gluckman are unable to see such beliefs as having any serious intellectual content, and so tend to treat them as nothing more than a sort of all-purpose social glue. Again, while the nineteenth-century writers felt that the invisibility, personality, and other equally curious properties attributed to mystical beings posed fascinating problems that demanded answers, their modern successors find little of interest in any aspect of religion other than its postulated capacity to keep society running smoothly.

But why this curious change of emphasis which, in sweeping so many unsolved problems out of sight, seems more of a sideways movement than one of intellectual progress? The change cannot be simply

<sup>1</sup> In the questions I ask here, I owe much to the influence of Professor Daryll Forde, who has more than once pointed out how crucial they are in the comparative study of religion.

ascribed to changes in personal religious conviction; for as far as I know all the writings involved reflect an agnostic outlook. What seems more important is that whereas the earlier writers were living in an environment dominated by religious believers, the modern agnostic is often the product of a milieu in which such believers are rather marginal beings.<sup>2</sup> Hence, while the earlier writers found no difficulty in conceiving of people who really did look out on the world through religious spectacles, their successors find this is a difficult feat of imagination. Again, for the earlier writers religion was a dangerous force whose every characteristic had to be charted and accounted for—even if only as an intelligence operation prior to a campaign. In the social milieu of modern agnosticism, however, religion has largely ceased to be regarded as effective. Hence attentive concern has given way to incurious apathy. But agnostic pronouncements on religion have evoked a number of recent reactions from Christian colleagues; and it is here that we move from Gluckman to Turner.

The setting of Turner's essay is the Ndembu culture of Central Africa—a culture whose population consists of shifting cultivators and hunters living in small villages organized about nuclei of matrilineal kin. The villages are unstable, being prone to conflicts and fission arising from land shortage, disputes between husbands and wives' brothers, struggles for headmanship, &c. Turner has described these communities and their cycles of conflict in his previous book *Schism and Continuity in an African Society*. This work is not only important for the background it provides to the essay under consideration: it is also notable for its theoretical approach, which follows closely the lines developed by Professor Gluckman during the last two decades and is still followed by him in his 'Rites de Passage'. Thus we find that even the most disintegrative conflicts are somehow linked with the achievement of a wider and more lasting equilibrium; and we are given the impression that rituals and other institutions are in a sense to be considered explained by the contribution they make to such equilibrium.

When we come to *Chihamba* fresh from a reading of *Schism and Continuity*, we are in for a surprise. For this is not just a detailed study of one of the rituals presented in outline in the former book: it is a work informed by a very different theoretical approach. The essay takes its title from that of the ritual it describes—i.e. initiation into the *Chihamba* cult. *Chihamba* is the most prominent of several 'cults of affliction', which according to Turner make up the most important part of Ndembu religious practice. These cults revolve around illnesses and

<sup>2</sup> For an exposition of this important difference between nineteenth- and twentieth-century agnosticism I am indebted to Professor Evans-Pritchard.



misfortunes inflicted on human beings mainly by the spirits of matrilineal ancestors and ancestresses. The latter are concerned with the solidarity and effectiveness of groups of matrilineal relatives; and when such solidarity is threatened, they inflict some of those involved with sickness and misfortune. Often, as in the cases dealt with by *Chihamba*, there is a danger not merely of misfortune but of death; and in these more serious cases, the ancestors are thought to be working in alliance with various non-ancestral spirits.

The ancestral spirits and their nature-spirit allies may strike people down in a number of different ways. Each such mode of affliction has its special counteractive ritual, which is valid whatever the exact identity of the ancestor involved. Thus affliction by a particular ancestor may be counteracted by different rituals on different occasions, and affliction by different ancestors may often be counteracted by the same ritual. Each of the various rituals is a highly complex symbolic performance requiring a good deal of specialized knowledge and numerous organizers. At the same time, each ritual is more or less the same throughout the length and breadth of Ndembuland. Hence, though the occasion of any particular performance may be the desire to rectify a purely local situation—e.g. the illness of one or more individuals and the disintegration of a village matrilineal core—the presence of ritual experts from other neighbouring groups is welcome. At the same time, these ritual experts feel a mutual solidarity which is independent of their communities of origin. They all learned their expertise by submitting to the ritual in which they specialize, and they are bound together by the common experience of suffering which led up to their first participation in it. They are bound together, too, by the collective prestige deriving from the importance of their knowledge to Ndembu generally. So it is that a particular performance, initiated for reasons related to the affairs of one or two small communities, can promote the solidarity of a great number of people drawn from a very wide area of territory. This effect of ritual performance, though more or less incidental, could be considered a unifying factor for Ndembu generally. And in *Schism and Continuity*, which was greatly preoccupied with such things, this aspect of the cults of affliction received more attention than any other.

In *Chihamba*, Turner is much more interested in the meaningful content of the ritual performance than in its unintended integrative functions. And this interest has led him to give us one of the most detailed and best-documented descriptions of a piece of ritual to appear in anthropological literature.

When a man or woman has been afflicted in the mode of *Chihamba*, this means that a female ancestor, in alliance with the male nature-spirit *Kavula*, is the cause of the trouble. The superficial intention of the ritual which ensues is to extricate afflicted people from their dangerous rela-

tionship with *Kavula* and the ancestress, and to establish a more beneficial bond with them.

The highlights of the *Chihamba* ritual are as follows. First, the afflicted victims are summoned to a hut where a hidden male adept, impersonating *Kavula*, asks them why they have sought him out, reviles them, and gives them special ritual names. On the next day, adepts clear a ritual enclosure in the bush, and there bury a bundle of symbolic objects. In so doing they are at once burying misfortune and installing *Kavula*. Later, they set up in the enclosure an image of *Kavula* made from a wooden framework covered by a white blanket and capped by an inverted wooden mortar.

While these preparations are going on, other adepts start to chase the candidates for submission to the ritual back and forth between the enclosure and the house of the senior victim of affliction. Songs sung at this time imply that the candidates have become slaves of *Kavula*, and to emphasize this they are made to carry heavy slave-yokes. With each chasing the candidates are brought closer and closer to the sacred enclosure until, at sundown, they are brought up one by one to make humble obeisance before the image of *Kavula*. Then, immediately afterwards, they are made to strike the image on the head with sacred rattles. The image shakes and finally keels over. *Kavula* is declared dead and all the participants return to the village.

The next day, candidates are taken out to a species of tree called *Ikamba da Chihamba*. A senior female adept bares the white tap-root of this tree, which is said to represent *Kavula*. Then a senior male adept cuts off a branch of the root; and this, together with other symbolic vegetable objects, is taken back to the village. Here again, this episode is said to be a 'wounding' of *Kavula*. On the way back to the village the adepts stop to draw a white clay image of *Kavula* on the ground. They cover this with a medicine basket, and make a double arch at its foot with a split sapling. The candidates are made to crawl up to the image and greet it as they greeted the forest image on the previous day. Then they too are ceremonially 'killed' by having a knife passed over their shoulders.

Back in the village the final important step is the setting-up, for each of those who have submitted to the ritual, of a personal shrine to the *Chihamba* spirits. These will henceforth be a source of benefit to their former victims. The setting-up of shrines begins with that of the senior female candidate. To make the latter's shrine, a bundle of twigs cut from trees symbolic of the *Chihamba* spirits is thrust into a hole, tamped with stream mud and libated with beer. A pot is placed near the bundle, and the blood of a cock poured into it. Finally, a piece of the *Ikamba da Chihamba* root is placed near by. Later, the shrines of the other candidates are set up in a similar manner. Four weeks afterwards the participants in *Chihamba* are released from their ritual taboos, and all is finished.

Through much of this ritual sequence, events are carried forward by the performance of elaborate symbolic actions and the manipulation of innumerable symbolic objects, the latter being largely drawn from the trees and plants of the surrounding forest. Turner has some interesting things to say about the structure of this luxuriant symbolism. Its chief features are: (a) that elementary symbols tend to be organized and used in complexes; (b) that each elementary symbol tends to have a large 'fan' of diverse potential meanings; and (c) that different selections from this fan of meanings are mobilized when a given symbol features in different complexes. Hence, though a given symbol has a restricted overt significance in any given context of use, it carries with it a vast penumbra of dimly apprehended latent meanings. It is these latent meanings, Turner suggests, which make people react with fear and awe to some of the more commonly recurring symbols, and which lead them to think of such symbols as charged with a mysterious power. Although much that Turner says on this score is sufficiently interesting to merit pages of discussion, he himself soon passes on from the structure of Ndembu symbolism to its actual content; and, in order to stick to the theme of this paper, we must follow him.

Turner admits that a good deal of the symbolism and organization of the *Chihamba* ritual reflects more general features of Ndembu social life. Thus the death and rebirth both of *Kavula* and of the candidates is one example of a common idiom for the expression of radical changes of status—used here to signify and indeed to bring about a crucial change in the relations between men and the spirits. Much the same could be said of the complementary action of the male *Kavula* and the female ancestress, and of the complementary position in the ritual of senior male adepts and senior female candidates: for this theme of male-female complementarity clearly echoes the basic principle of Ndembu social organization, which is that male authority is dependent on descent through the female line.

But, says Turner, there is much more in the *Chihamba* ritual which we cannot begin to understand if we insist that it is a mere reflection of Ndembu social structure. This is especially true of the spirit *Kavula*, of his personality, and of the symbols associated with him. If we go carefully through the attributes assigned to *Kavula*, we shall find that he sums up in his being almost all the major forces which Ndembu see operating in their world. Thus he is associated with gerontocratic authority, with the unity of the whole of Ndembuland, with the fertility of crops and people, with rainfall and the elements, and with hunting. At the same time, he is associated with disease and death, and with the destructive powers of lightning. But *Kavula* is not just the sum of all these forces: he is something beyond them and more than them. And it is to empha-

size this that the *Chihamba* ritual lays such stress on paradox. Thus, by presenting *Kavula* first as one in the forest image, and then as many in the personal shrines made at the end of the ritual, Ndembu show that he transcends the opposition between the one and the many. Again, by commanding candidates to strike down *Kavula* after they have given him the obeisance due to a chief, they show that he transcends the opposition between authority and subordination. And by presenting him in renewed life after he has been killed, they not only show that he transcends the opposition between death and life: they also show by means of allegory his ultimate elusiveness from conceptual control. In fact, one might regard the whole of the *Chihamba* ritual as a lesson that *Kavula* is at once identifiable with most of the major forces in the Ndembu world, and at the same time transcends them all.

What, then, is *Kavula*? This question can only be answered, Turner feels, in terms of the traditional Thomist distinction between particular existing things and the pure existence which is the ground and support of all of them. *Kavula* is the Ndembu representation of this pure existence, or, as Turner puts it following Étienne Gilson, this 'pure-act-of-being'. Because it is in the nature of language to be concerned with particular existing things, a literal conceptualization of pure-act-of-being is impossible; and this is why *Kavula* can only be defined with the aid of symbol and paradox. This too is why the *Chihamba* ritual appears as a concentration of white symbols: for whiteness represents both that which is whole or total and that which is devoid of particular attributes. On this interpretation, the *Chihamba* ritual must be seen as an attempt both to say obliquely what cannot be said directly about pure-act-of-being, and to express dependence on this primal entity. These ends, says Turner, cannot be treated as the product of some specific kind of social organization. For they are not merely the ends of Ndembu worshippers: they are the ends of 'ritual man' the world over.

To help convince the reader that *Chihamba* is 'the local expression of a universal-human problem', Turner traces its close parallels with two better-known representations of pure-act-of-being—that found in the New Testament story of Christ's Death and Resurrection, and that found in Herman Melville's saga of the doomed quest for the great white whale Moby Dick. Although he clearly feels that the Christian representation carries with it certain unique claims to truth and value, he nevertheless sees basic similarities between the representations of *Kavula*, Christ, and the white whale. Thus in all three there is the feeling of the impossibility of direct statement, and the development of symbol and allegory to 'grasp the ungraspable'. There is the predominance of white symbols, aimed at representing that which is at once the ground of all things and the transcender of all things. There is the great develop-

ment of paradox, and especially of the theme of the striking-down which yet does not annihilate—an allegory of that which by its very nature can never be finally pinned down by human thought.

Anthropologists in the tradition of Frazer and Durkheim, says Turner, would prefer not to recognize these constants of the religious situation. They would rather explain away religious phenomena or reduce them to non-religious terms. For, like Melville's Captain Ahab, they seek to destroy that belief in a deity which wounds and menaces their self-sufficiency. But only if they become humble in the face of religious experience, like the harpooner Queequeg, can they ever discover anything worth while about 'ritual man.'<sup>3</sup>

Any reader of Turner's essay will be struck by a deep feeling for the importance of religious ritual in human intellectual and emotional life—a feeling notably absent from too many current analyses. Readers of my own persuasion will also be refreshed by the message that different areas of human social behaviour need to be explained in terms of different motives—a welcome change from the kind of anthropological interpretation that apparently assumes no human motives other than the quest for social harmony, the quest for power, and the quest for food. Having said this, however, I must confess uneasiness about the particular framework of interpretation that Turner favours.

First of all, it is clear from Turner's essay that the Ndembu already have in *Nzambi* a supreme being who, even though he does not feature prominently in their ritual, certainly occupies a significant place in their thought. Now if *Kavula* really is an attempt to represent pure-act-of-being, the primal entity that underlies and supports all things in man's world, why do Ndembu not identify him with *Nzambi* or at least treat him as the latter's special manifestation? The nearest Turner gets to showing that they do either of these is with an informant who says that '*Kavula* is more like *Nzambi* than an ancestor spirit'. But judging from the context of this statement it seems specifically designed to emphasize the non-ancestral nature of *Kavula*, and would probably have been applicable to other non-ancestral spirits. It is rather as if the Thomist philosophers, having worked out their theory of pure-act-of-being, were to claim that the latter's representation was to be found neither in God nor in Jesus Christ, but in the most important of the archangels. One would certainly want some explanation of what would seem to be a deliberate obscurantism on their part.

It is even a little doubtful whether *Kavula* really does sum up in his person all the major social and natural forces which Ndembu see operat-

<sup>3</sup> Though the author mentions no contemporary names, it would not perhaps be entirely fanciful to see in Melville's whaling ship *Pequod* the Manchester School of Social Anthropology; in Captain Ahab the powerful, charismatic figure of Professor Gluckman; and in the harpooner Queequeg Dr. Turner himself.

ing in their world, and whether he transcends all the salient oppositions and contrasts in this world. We have already noted that, in the *Chihamba* ritual, *Kavula* acts as the husband of an afflicting ancestress. And there is more than a hint that this ancestress embodies a set of forces which are distinct from and complementary to those summed up in the person of *Kavula*. Thus at one point she is said to be associated with narrow and localized matrilineage loyalties, while *Kavula* is associated with the unity of all Ndembu or even of all Lunda. Again, she is said to be associated with matrilineal descent, while *Kavula* is associated with male authority over women. Instead of transcending all salient oppositions and contrasts, then, *Kavula* appears to be on one side of at least some of them.

Perhaps one could only give a conclusive verdict on Turner's interpretation if all the various connotations of *Kavula* were plotted alongside those of the various other categories of non-ancestral and ancestral spirit. Since Turner says that the present essay is merely a progress report, to be followed by a full-scale book on Ndembu religion, one hopes that he may eventually lay out his material in this way, and so enable us to make a more definite assessment.

At once more important and more controversial than Turner's application of Thomist concepts to the translation of Ndembu ideas is his advocacy of such concepts as the appropriate translation instruments for religious ideas generally. This emerges in the last chapter of *Chihamba*, where, so far as I can grasp his rich and complex analysis, he seems to be asserting the following propositions:

1. The difficulty of grasping the nature of pure existence (or pure-act-of-being in Turner's terminology) as distinct from particular existing things and their properties is 'indissociable from the very structure of language and conceptualization'. That is, it is a human universal.

2. We can define 'Ritual Man' as one who has a sense of dependence on pure existence or pure-act-of-being, and as one who, in all ages and places, is passionately engaged in trying to overcome the inherent difficulty of expressing this sense of dependence.

3. The concept of 'Ritual Man', defined in these terms, might be made central to the comparative study of religion. This is implied by the analogy with the concept of 'Economic Man' as used in economics, and with that of 'The Reasonable Man' as used in law.

Turner also appears to be asserting a less specific thesis, which is entailed by the foregoing, but could also be asserted independently. This thesis can be summarized in the following propositions:

4. All the behaviour and belief we call religious, from one end of the world to the other, is a product of the same essential human aspiration. Though some people may deny having such an aspiration because it involves a sense of dependence on a supreme being which is wounding to self-sufficiency, it is in fact universal.

5. The essential aspiration of religion cannot be explained in terms of any other human aspirations nor can it be reduced to any other such aspirations.

6. This follows from (4). For the European anthropologist, acceptance of religious insights couched in the idiom of his own culture is the key to understanding of religions generally. Rejection of such insights makes this wider understanding impossible.

Now there is nothing *prima facie* wrong with this set of propositions. True, they appear to be closely connected with the author's own religious beliefs; but this need not necessarily be a defect. A first step in the analysis of an alien religious system must always be the search for an area of discourse in one's own language which can appropriately serve as a translation instrument.<sup>4</sup> And in so far as he is thoroughly at home in the religious discourse of his own culture, the Christian would seem to be at an advantage over the agnostic in this matter. The reasonableness of this argument receives support from the defects of most of the religious analyses carried out by agnostic anthropologists. Since their errors and their omissions are often so patently related to their personal hostility or apathy to things religious, the remedy seems straightforward enough: the Christian must make full use of his own religious discourse in translating the religious ideas of alien cultures.

Reasonable as they seem, however, the propositions which Turner appears to be asserting in the last chapter of *Chihamba* must stand or fall by their applicability to the raw data of religious belief and behaviour throughout the world. And here, of course, we shall be particularly interested in their applicability to African data.

Before confronting Turner's narrower thesis with the data, it might be as well to remind ourselves of the essentials of the Thomist position from which this thesis starts out. According to Thomist premisses, everything in the world around us has certain definitive properties (its essence) and, in addition, the property of existence. Since the essences of things can be thought of apart from their existence, they are said to be contingent. Existence in itself, however, is logically prior to the other properties; hence pure being is the necessary ground and support of all the other attributes of all the particular things in the world. Not only this: pure being is identical with its own essence; and since its essence cannot be thought of apart from its existence, it is self-necessitating. It is this pure being, necessary ground of all things and sufficient reason for its own existence, that Thomists identify with the Absolute, the First Cause,

<sup>4</sup>The importance of translation into one's own language as a crucial phase of anthropological analysis may seem self-evident. But the implications of its importance have often been neglected. In making the search for appropriate translation instruments a pivot of my analysis, I am following the guidance of such people as Professor Evans-Pritchard, Dr. Godfrey Lienhardt, and Professor Ernest Gellner.

the Godhead, &c. But having established the necessity of pure being, one can make no further direct statements about it: for language, by its very nature, is concerned only with the distinguishing properties of individual things (essences). Thus it is that in order to delineate pure being one is driven into the obliqueness of symbol and allegory.

Now Turner implies that this conception of pure being, of its relation to the world, and of the difficulties of making direct statements about it, is forced upon all men by the very structure of their thought and language. But this cannot be true. For the whole complex of problems and preoccupations sketched here is indissociable from the particular meaning which Thomists attach to the word 'exists'. Since they treat this as a predicate which in some respects is on the same level as 'is-hard', 'is-green', 'is-alive', and so on, it is possible for them to have meaningful discussions about an entity which has the sole attribute of existence—i.e. pure being. But there is another conceptual framework, just as widely current in modern Western culture, in which 'exists' has quite a different meaning. Within this framework, to say that 'X has properties *Y* and exists' is merely to say that 'the statement "X has properties *Y*" is true'. Here, no sense can be attached to statements about pure existence; and the problems and preoccupations associated with this concept just do not arise.<sup>5</sup> Although this latter conceptual framework is commonly associated with logical positivism, it is also one in which many Protestant thinkers are at home; and correspondingly, their thought about God's relation to the world tends to follow very different lines from that of the Thomists. Since by no means even all Christian thinkers acknowledge the usefulness and relevance of the Thomist conceptual framework, it would appear to be a poor candidate for the translation of religious ideas on a world-wide basis.

When we come to the study of African traditional religions, the picture seems equally unpromising. In so far as nearly all known African traditional religions feature a supreme being who is the creator and sustainer of all that is, one could perhaps say that such religions take account of something vaguely akin to the Thomist pure-act-of-being. But where we have nothing that evidently corresponds to the crucial Thomist distinctions between existence and essence, and between self-necessitating and contingent entities, the kinship would seem to be vague indeed. More

<sup>5</sup> Here I follow the Oxford Linguistic Philosophers in assuming that one cannot discuss problems and preoccupations as distinct from the terminology used for expressing them: change the terminology and you have changed the problems. Where I do not follow this school is in their tendency to assume that the Thomist sense of 'exists' is an abuse of language and hence meaningless in an absolute sense: Thomist thought would have been dead long ago had things been as easy as that. I am implying, however, that since 'exists' means quite other things in other conceptual frameworks, the problems it raises for Thomists cannot be said to force themselves upon all men.



important still, it would be a distortion to say that African religion was in any way centred on the struggle to adumbrate in symbols what could not be directly said about this primal entity, or that such a struggle 'engaged the passionate attention of ritual man' throughout the continent. Indeed, though African thought-systems are very variable in this respect, the predominant atmosphere in many of them is one of apathy about the supreme being. Often, he is acknowledged to be the ultimate sustainer of everything in the world; but at the same time people say little about him either directly or in symbolism. Their thought and energy is focused mainly on the lesser spirits who, though they are the creation of the supreme being, are directly associated with most of the happenings in people's immediate environment. These lesser spirits are just as real to their worshippers as the supreme being; and relations with them are surely as much a part of religion as relations with this being.

What of the wider thesis implicit in the last chapter of *Chihamba*—the thesis that the same essential human aspiration is at the root of religious activity in all ages and in all places; that this aspiration is not to be explained by or reduced to any others; and that acknowledgement of this aspiration in one's own life gives one the only real key to understanding religions of other cultures very different from one's own?

This wider thesis has many initial appearances of validity. After all, Politics is a universal category of human social life, and to it corresponds the quest for power; Law is another such universal category, and to it corresponds the quest for social regulation; Religion is yet another universal category, apparently on the same level as these others: so surely it too must have some essential and universal aspiration at its root. Again, few anthropological fieldworkers suffer from much doubt as to which of the behaviour they deal with is religious and which is not; and most of them tend to accept as a working definition the proposition that religion involves the belief in one or more spiritual beings, together with action based on this belief.

Nevertheless, the question still remains: does this straightforward and innocent-sounding definition really refer to a single human aspiration found at the centre of all religions; or is it a blanket covering a great diversity of aspirations?

Perhaps the best way to set about testing the usefulness of Turner's wider thesis is to start out with a sketch of contemporary Christian pre-occupations that might be acceptable to most branches of the faith. For the sake of argument, let us adopt the following. Christians are centrally preoccupied with a supreme being whose reality transcends the space-time order. Knowledge of this being and of His perfect love and goodness gives life a depth, fullness, and richness which non-believers confined to the space-time plane can never suspect. It is as if life had one less dimension for the non-believer; and this is why he is often compared to

a blind man. Much as modern Christianity has to say about the joys of living in the light of God's love and goodness, however, it shows little interest in furnishing a detailed interpretation of connexions between phenomena in the space-time world. Efforts to give it such an interest, like that of Teilhard de Chardin, are not even greatly approved of by the Churches. Indeed, one could say that the Churches take the detailed working of the space-time world with no further explanatory comment than the statement that whatever happens in this realm is ultimately ordained by God.

If we take this sketch of Christian preoccupations into the field of African traditional religions, two great questions arise. First, does our sketch in any way tally with a sketch one might make of the central preoccupations of African religions? Secondly, can familiarity with Christian preoccupations and acceptance of their validity give us some special key to the understanding of African religions?

As with Turner's narrower Thomist thesis, the answers once again seem rather negative. First of all, there is the frequent apathy about the supreme being, and the concentration of intellectual and emotional energies on the figures of the lesser spirits. Again, though there is a good deal in African traditional religions which suggests the central Christian experience of intense personal communion with a loving God, such communion seems more often associated with the lesser spirits than with the supreme being. Finally and most strikingly, the primary intention of much African religious thought seems to be just that mapping of connexions between space-time phenomena which modern Christian thought feels is beyond its proper domain. Though, by the standards of the more advanced contemporary sciences, these religions seldom provide valid explanations or make completely successful predictions, there is a very real sense in which they are just as concerned with explanation and prediction as the sciences are. In this respect, they are as close to the latter as they are to modern Christianity.

So far as a confrontation of modern Christianity with traditional African religions is concerned, then, it looks as though the essential aspiration of the one is often the marginal aspiration of the other, and vice versa. This being so, Christian discourse can be a translation instrument of only limited use where African religions are concerned; and familiarity with it cannot promise any general key to understanding which is not available to the agnostic.

Again, this confrontation throws doubt on the proposition that religious aspirations are not to be explained in terms of any others or reduced to them. As I have said, many African traditional religions, with their passionate interest in the explanation and prediction of space-time events, are as close to the sciences as they are to modern Christianity.

Hence I venture to suggest that, over much of Africa, Ritual Man is not really a distinctive being, but is rather a sub-species of Theory-building Man.

This last suggestion leads directly to the constructive part of my argument. Professor Gluckman's programme for interpreting African ritual depends on the assumption of a dominant concern for the harmonious and smooth running of social life. Turner's reaction to this sort of programme depends on the assumption of a dominant concern with 'saying the unsayable' about the ultimate ground of all particular forms of existence. I prefer to be thoroughly old-fashioned and go back to the sort of assumption that guided Tylor, Frazer, and Van Gennep—that the really significant aspiration behind a great deal of African religious thought is the most obvious one; i.e., the attempt to explain and influence the working of one's everyday world by discovering the constant principles that underlie the apparent chaos and flux of sensory experience. In so far as we make this aspiration central to our analysis, we shall find ourselves searching for translation instruments not so much in the realm of Christian discourse as in that of the sciences and their theoretical concepts.

All this may sound at first like some dreadful humanist commando raid—designed to snatch Africa from the hands of the Thomists only to deliver it into the ranks of the scientists. It is, of course, nothing of the sort; for, as the reader will see, the analysis that follows takes full account of the crucial things that divide the pre-scientific thought-systems of Africa from the thought of the sciences. Nevertheless, as I shortly hope to show, an exploration of the common patterns of reasoning that underlie these crucial differences could be a valuable preliminary to the interpretation of African religious thought.

Now one very common way of trying to explain a set of observed phenomena is in terms of a scheme of underlying processes or events. To provide the basis of a satisfying explanation this scheme must be such as to display the diversity and complexity of observed phenomena as the product of an underlying unity, simplicity, and regularity. Thus an important part of modern chemical thought is the body of theory which explains the vast diversity of recorded substances as a product of the combination and recombination of a limited number of elements according to a few relatively simple rules. Given certain assumptions about regularities of events in the theoretical scheme, and certain identifications of these events with observed phenomena, it becomes possible to deduce the occurrence of the latter as necessary. And when such deduction is applied to future occurrences, we have prediction. Thus the theory of chemical elements and their combination can be used either to show the necessity of the occurrence of certain substances already ob-

served, or to predict the future occurrence of substances not yet observed.

When they are used in the sciences, such explanatory and predictive schemes are known as 'theoretical models'. And the commonly approved criteria for accepting or rejecting such models are what we call 'the Rules of Scientific Method'. By and large, these criteria are simply an inventory of the conditions which make for maximum efficiency in fulfilling the aims of explanation and prediction. The African religious systems which contain the counterparts of these theoretical models are, as we have said, sustained by the same basic aims of explanation and prediction. They differ from the thought-systems of science most notably in the absence of any guiding body of explicit acceptance/rejection criteria that would ensure the efficiency with which they pursue their aims.<sup>6</sup>

In devoting itself almost exclusively to exploring the rules for acceptance and rejection of theoretical models, modern philosophical analysis has concentrated on that aspect of Western scientific thought which most distinguishes it from the thought-systems of Africa. In more recent years, however, the philosophers have begun to turn their attention to another aspect in which the resemblances are probably more significant than the differences. Here I am thinking of the actual generation of theoretical models—the process whereby an area of puzzling observations provokes speculation as to a possible underlying mechanism, and gives birth to the tentative explanatory scheme which 'scientific logic' then goes to work on.

Perhaps the only thing we know for certain about this process is that most theoretical models are drawn from phenomena already observed in the visible and tangible world. The investigator is impressed by an analogy between the puzzling observations he wants to explain and the structure of certain phenomena whose behaviour has already been well explored. Because of this analogy, he postulates a scheme of events with structure akin to that of the prototype phenomena, and equates this scheme with the reality 'behind' the observations that puzzle him. Such well-known models as those involving the molecule, the planetary atom, the electric current, and the light wave all have fairly obvious prototypes in the world of everyday phenomena. Similarly, we can often see the prototypes of African religious models in the social life of the peoples who have evolved them.

What is not so well established is why a particular set of phenomena

<sup>6</sup>One reason why 'Rules of Scientific Method' have been developed so rarely in human history may be that they inevitably enjoin a continuous readiness to scrap established models as soon as these fall below their standards. Such a readiness involves attitudes which run counter to some of man's most deep-seated psychological tendencies; and it can only be developed in certain particular social and environmental settings which offset those tendencies.

is drawn upon as the prototype of an explanatory model in a particular situation. As Stephen Toulmin has remarked, there is no possible step of inductive or deductive inference which can lead unambiguously from a given set of puzzling observations to a given theoretical model. And as for the perception of structural analogy which is the basis of the model-making process, this too would seem to permit a considerable range of choice in any given observational situation. Indeed, Toulmin's appraisal has led him to state that in the thought of science, as well as in that of pre-science, model-making probably owes as much to the wider thought-patterns and fashions of the age as it does to the nature of the observations to be explained.

This brings us to the point at which we can reintroduce one of the central questions that we raised in connexion with Gluckman's essay. What cultural variables are responsible for the fact that Western scientific thought tends to choose things rather than people as the basis of its explanatory models, while African thought-systems by and large tend to make the opposite choice?

Though I do not think we are yet in a position to give a fully satisfactory answer to this question, we can perhaps get a clue to some of the factors involved by going back to what the philosophers of science define as the essential feature of an explanatory model. According to them, the logic of explanation demands first and foremost that the underlying events postulated by any theoretical model should be connected in an orderly and regular fashion: for explanation *is* the demonstration of order underlying apparent chaos and of regularity underlying apparent haphazardness. Hence, to qualify as a suitable prototype for a model, a set of phenomena needs not only to be thoroughly familiar, but also to be manifestly orderly and regular in its behaviour.

Now in technologically backward communities which have a relatively simple social organization and are not in a state of rapid and self-conscious change, people's activities in society present the most markedly ordered and regular area of their experience, whereas their biological and inanimate environment is by and large less tidily predictable. Hence it is chiefly to human activities and relationships that such communities turn for the sources of their most important explanatory models. It is probably fair to say that much of traditional African society typifies this pattern.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Though manifest regularity is almost certainly a crucial prerequisite for selection as the basis of a model, it would obviously be an over-simplification to treat it as the only factor involved. Most African thought-systems, for instance, are aware of well-marked regularities in the inanimate environment which they have nevertheless failed to exploit in their model-making operations. Here I am thinking especially of the regular behaviour of sun and moon which, of course, are noted in all African societies. The reason in this case may be that the regularities involve isolated celestial

Where technological development has gone further, we find advances both in the perception of environmental regularities and in the construction of artificial regularities in machines. At this stage, the impersonal world is increasingly seen as a locus of order and regularity; and, as in early Greek civilization, impersonal explanatory models appear alongside the personal models with their various gods.<sup>8</sup> A further stage of the process is to be seen in modern industrial societies. In these, not only do social relations have a greatly increased complexity: their commitment to continuous change gives them a pervasive aura of uncertainty which blurs any appearance of order and regularity, and in this respect they become inferior to the inanimate world. In such societies, impersonal explanatory models come to have the strongest appeal as much in the realms of psychology and anthropology as in the realm of physics.

African religious systems, then, can be seen as the outcome of a model-making process which is found alike in the thought of science and in that of pre-science. The personalized nature of their models can be tentatively ascribed to the influence of particular social and technological conditions on the working-out of this probably universal process. If we look at African traditional thought in this light, many otherwise puzzling features begin to make sense. Take for instance the invisibility of the gods, their 'behindness', or what Gluckman calls their 'freedom from sensory control'. This is perhaps the most intriguing of the properties evoked by that rather romantic phrase 'mystical beings'. Yet it would appear directly linked to the explanatory function of African religious beliefs. For the essence of the type of explanation we have been considering is that events and processes which feature in the theoretical model must not be available to the same acts of observation as register the events

bodies rather than a whole system of such bodies, and hence do not provide a structure rich enough to serve as the basis of an explanatory model. Contrast the African situation with that which prevailed in the Ancient Near East, where the regular movements of a large number of celestial bodies were noted, and where the resulting system became the basis of the explanatory model which we know as Astrology.

<sup>8</sup> In his *Greek Science*, Benjamin Farrington has given a brilliant account of the emergence of impersonal explanatory models in early Ionian thought. He shows how closely the Ionian development of such models was linked, not only to the great technological development of the civilization, but also to the fact that the ruling and leisured classes of society took great pride in these developments and were thoroughly conversant with them. They were therefore familiar with a wide range of order and regularity in the inanimate world, and it was this range that they drew upon in the creation of their models. Farrington suggests that the decline of Ionian thought is linked with the growth of a slave-owning economy, with the subsequent decline in the importance attached to labour-saving technology, and with the relegation of existing technical know-how to the lower orders of society. As this process gathered way, the ruling and leisured classes became less and less conversant with the regularities of the inanimate world as revealed by technology; and personal models began once more to dominate the intellectual scene.

and processes which the model is evoked to explain. If they were so available, they would merely have rejoined the inventory of phenomena to be explained. In modern science this requirement is generally fulfilled by the postulation of microscopic and ultra-microscopic entities as elements of the major theoretical models—e.g. cells, genes, molecules, and elementary particles. But micro-reduction is by no means the only direction which this kind of explanation can logically take. There is no purely logical consideration which prevents the elements of a model from being non-microscopic, yet still inaccessible to the acts of observation which register the data to be explained—as indeed the African gods are.

Again, take what, for the want of a better word, one may call the ‘incompleteness’ of the African gods. Between different African religions, and even between different sectors of the same religion, there is a good deal of variation in the number of dimensions of human life which are incorporated into the figures of the various gods. Nearly always, however, some dimensions are missing. What these are varies from case to case. Perhaps one only notices that they are missing if one has the naïvety to ask all the questions about a god that one would ask about a man. Does he beget children? How many has he? What kind of a house does he live in? Is he handsome? How tall is he? Is he kind to his wives? One has only to go a little way along this road before getting the sort of blank stare which indicates that one has been asking entirely meaningless questions. Probably one will be told curtly: ‘We are talking about the spirits; not about men.’<sup>9</sup>

That there is nothing in this situation peculiar to African gods becomes apparent if one asks the same sort of questions about the theoretical entities of the sciences. What is the temperature of a hydrogen molecule? What is the colour of a proton? However appropriate such questions would have been if asked of the prototype phenomena from which these entities were drawn, they are certainly quite out of order if asked of the entities themselves. The reason is directly connected with the explanatory function of theoretical entities. Earlier, we noted that the creation of a new theoretical model takes place when an investigator traces an analogy between the structure of certain puzzling observations and that of certain phenomena whose regularities of behaviour he is al-

<sup>9</sup> This is an experience reported in connexion with religious systems in other parts of the world. Thus Edmund Leach says of a Kachin who claims to be killing a pig and giving it to the *nat* spirits: ‘It is nonsense to ask such questions as “Do *nats* have legs? Do they eat flesh? Do they live in the sky?”’ From the fact that such questions are nonsense to the Kachins, Leach concludes that they do not take statements about the *nats* as literally true. But since it does not appear from Leach’s data that the Kachins give evidence of intending their statements about these spirits in any sense other than a literal one, the conclusion seems odd. I think the interpretation which I offer here might do better justice to the facts.

ready familiar with. He draws on these phenomena as the basis of a model which he equates with the reality underlying his initial observations. But the structural analogy between the observations and the prototype phenomena seldom involves more than a limited aspect of the latter. And it is only this limited aspect that is taken over and incorporated into the model. The rest is left behind: for, from the point of view of explanatory function, it is just so much dross. Thus the atomic physicist Rutherford, in forming his revolutionary planetary model of the atom, left behind such features as the colour and temperature of the planets as irrelevant to his explanatory task. In just the same way, when he fashions the gods from people, the African thinker leaves behind as irrelevant many features of human activity and physical appearance.

Another feature of African traditional thought which now becomes less puzzling is the often-remarked tendency towards definition of the various units of society in 'mystical' or religious terms. Thus the Kalabari village is defined as that group of people which has its own *amatemeso*—the personal force that guides the thread of its history. The autonomous Ibo political unit is the largest group of communities sharing a common cult of *ala*—spirit of the earth. The Ashanti state is that unit which is guided and held together by the souls of the royal ancestors. And so on. Such definitions, again, are a logical consequence of the explanatory role of religious ideas. For theoretical models inevitably dictate the ways in which the data they explain are classified and hence described. Things apparently diverse at the level of observation may be manifestations of a single process in the model, and will be classified accordingly; while things which show superficial similarities at the level of observation may be manifestation of diverse aspects of the model, and classification, again, will proceed accordingly. Hence the sheerest description may contain implicit references to the model. A chemist, asked to give a thorough description of some substance in his laboratory, can hardly avoid mentioning such characteristics as molecular weight and formula, which refer implicitly to a massive body of chemical theory. In the same way, an African villager, who is trying to describe what his community is, can hardly avoid implicit reference to religious concepts. In so far as one can only start to understand social relations through familiarity with the terms in which those involved think about them, it is probably true to say that he who wishes to understand many African societies must first understand their religions.

We can now reconsider some of the questions raised by Professor Gluckman. First: why is ritual, in the sense of approach to mystical powers, such a frequent accompaniment of *rites de passage* in which an individual is taken from one role to another? The answer seems clear in the light of what has been said in the last few paragraphs. These changes of role usually involve incorporation into a new group or a new set of



relationships; and, as we have seen, a corporate group is apt to be defined in terms of the personal beings who are 'behind' the co-ordinated activities of its members. It is these beings who keep the group flourishing, or weaken it in response to breaches of group norms. Because membership of the group implies having one's life partially controlled by such beings, becoming a member logically involves a process of being put under their control.

The second question which interests Gluckman is: why, in so many African rituals where the members of a corporate group approach a mystical power, do those concerned participate in a manner which lays exaggerated emphasis on the patterns of behaviour proper among each other in the wider context of social life? Here again, I think, the answer follows clearly from what has already been said about African religious ideas. In most African societies, the strength and welfare of corporate groups is seen as intimately bound up with their members' close observance of their moral norms. Consistently with this, the spirits that underpin the various corporate groups of a society nearly always support the moral norms of such groups; and their strengthening action is conditional upon observance of these norms. When a group assembles to approach its guiding spirit, it is therefore appropriate that its members, in their behaviour to one another during the ritual, should demonstrate their readiness to observe group norms.

The sketch of an approach to African traditional religions I have given in the last few paragraphs is brief, impressionistic, and highly tentative. Yet I think it indicates a line of inquiry more fruitful than that favoured by Gluckman. For it seems capable of explaining the salient morphological features of African religious beliefs *as well as* the relation of these beliefs to the social organization. Again, I hope my sketch has shown clearly enough that Turner's answer to the agnostic anthropologist is by no means the only permissible one and that one might even be able to go further in the interpretation of his Ndembu material in the terms sketched above than in his own Thomist terms. Thus one can look at the beliefs about *Kavula* and the ancestress as means of bringing intellectual order into a variety of everyday experience: more specifically, that they constitute the basis of a theoretical model which enables one to place such diverse oppositions as masculinity/femininity, pan-Lunda loyalties/matrilineage loyalties, authority/descent (and possibly others such as settlement area/forest), as instances of the operation of a single pair of underlying forces related to one another as contrasting complementaries. This would make *Kavula* very different from a representation of pure-act-of-being; but it would avoid some of the crucial difficulties of Turner's interpretation.

I am not, of course, trying to say that the approach I have suggested here is the only way towards an understanding of African religions; nor

am I saying that it must exclude the sort of insight which modern Christians are equipped to provide. Indeed, as I noted earlier, there is a good deal in African traditional religions which recalls the Christian experience of communion with a loving God—even though in the African context such communion seems to be associated more with the lesser spirits than with the supreme being. Involving as it does intense personal relationships with beings beyond the human social order, the communion aspect of African religion tends to take people outside the daily round of visible and tangible experience. In this sense it moves thought in the opposite direction from the explanatory aspect, which starts in the realm of unobservable beings, and brings these to bear on visible and tangible things. Formally opposed though they are, these two aspects of religion are found intermingled in many African cultures. Nor is the tension between these two opposites always an unfruitful one: for in the shamans, prophets, and mystics of traditional religion, we see people who both pass out of the sphere of visible and tangible things in their communion, and also return from time to time with explanatory schemes which make new sense of the visible and tangible world.

This intermingling of explanation and communion seems to have been typical of Christianity down through medieval times. But after the revolution of thought in seventeenth-century Europe there was a steady differentiation, science progressively taking over the explanatory aspect, and religion becoming more and more a matter of communion. Opposites once fruitfully mingled became clearly distinguished and even set against one another. So much so that today a rare feat of imagination is required of the man who would both commit himself wholeheartedly to the ideals of Western science and at the same time remain fully committed to the Christian faith.

Hence, if it is true that the primary problem of the social anthropologist is one of finding the areas of discourse in his own language whose logic comes nearest that of the alien discourse he wishes to analyse, the would-be student of African religions is faced with a heavy task. For he must bring together in his own single mind areas of discourse which modern Western culture tends to make the preserve of different categories of people.



## 40 The Philosophy of the Navaho Indians

Clyde Kluckhohn

SO FAR IN THIS SECTION DEVOTED TO "IDEOLOGY" THE SELECTIONS HAVE dealt primarily with approaches to the supernatural albeit with frequent reference to the relations between religion and social organization. Ideologies comprise more than religion no matter how broadly the latter may be construed. Ideology includes all of the interpretive devices by which man seeks to explain the universe, the world, his environment, his fellows and himself. It includes not only any feelings he may have about the supernatural but all of his concepts about space, time, matter and energy. It also includes what he thinks about the division of labor, sex, beauty, right and wrong, pride and shame. Indeed, so vast and comprehensive is the value system of a culture that it is synonymous with the culture itself, so intertwined with its language as to suggest identity according to the psycholinguists (see I:29).

*The late Clyde Kluckhohn was a pioneer in building explicit models*

SOURCE: *Ideological Differences and World Order*, F. S. C. Northrop (editor) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949), pp. 356-383. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

Clyde Kluckhohn (1905-1960) was Professor of Anthropology at Harvard University. He did fieldwork in Greece and among the Hopi, but is best remembered for his prolonged and intensive study of the Navaho. Interested in all fields of anthropology, Kluckhohn was outstanding in his focus on the anthropological study of values. Among his works are *Navaho Witchcraft* (1944), *The Navaho* (with Dorothea Leighton, 1946), *Mirror for Man* (1949) and *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (with Alfred L. Kroeber, 1952). In 1962 his anthropologist son, Richard, edited a posthumous collection of Clyde Kluckhohn's essays under the title *Culture and Behavior*.

*of value systems and his pilot study was the Navaho described in the article below. Not all anthropologists are comfortable with the kinds of generalizations to be found there. It is suggested therefore that the reader might bear at least two questions in mind as he proceeds through the argument. Is it really probable that all Navahos believe and act in accordance with Kluckhohn's statements? (See II:7.) Is it likely that Navaho philosophy is as neat and coherent as Kluckhohn presents it, or has the effect been created by ignoring disparate, not to say conflicting, themes? Note in passing the similarity between these critical questions and those raised in conjunction with culture-and-personality analysis (see II:48).*

The publication of Paul Radin's *Primitive Man as a Philosopher* did much toward destroying the myth that a cognitive orientation toward experience was a peculiarity of literate societies. Speculation and reflection upon the nature of the universe and of man's place in the total scheme of things have been carried out in every known culture. Every people has its characteristic set of "primitive postulates." As Bateson has said: "The human individual is endlessly simplifying and generalizing his own view of his environment; he constantly imposes on this environment his own constructions and meanings; these constructions and meanings are characteristic of one culture as opposed to another."

It remains true that critical examination of basic premises and fully explicit systematization of philosophical concepts are seldom found at the nonliterate level. The printed word is an almost essential condition for free and extended discussion of fundamental issues. Where dependence on memory exists, there seems to be an inevitable tendency to emphasize the correct perpetuation of the precious oral tradition. Similarly, while it is all too easy to underestimate the extent to which ideas spread without books, it is in general true that tribal or folk societies do not possess competing philosophical systems. The major exception to this statement is, of course, the case where part of the tribe becomes converted to one of the great proselytizing religions such as Christianity or Mohammedanism. But, before contact with rich and powerful civilizations, "primitive" peoples seem to have absorbed new ideas piecemeal, slowly integrating them with the previously existent ideology.

Although there are no organized groups of human beings without their own philosophy, there are, then, some tendencies toward differentiation between literate and nonliterate societies. The abstract thought of the latter is ordinarily less self-critical, less systematic, less elaborated in purely logical dimensions; more concrete, more implicit—perhaps more completely coherent than the philosophy of most individuals in larger societies which have been influenced over long periods by disparate intellectual currents. It must be remembered, however, that these state-

ments are made at a relatively high level of abstraction. There are such wide variations in the philosophies of "primitive" folk that, in empirical detail, any black-and-white contrast between "primitive" and "civilized" philosophy would be altogether fictitious.

This consideration of a single nonliterate philosophy is, therefore, not offered as a representation of "primitive man's thought." It affords merely a single illustration of orientations which are typical of the members of one large (60,000) nonliterate group with a fairly homogeneous culture. In the earlier part of this chapter the presentation will be restricted to "native" (i.e., pre-European) ideas. Later, the effects of ideas from white American culture will be touched upon. By no means every adult, minimally acculturated Navaho would set forth all of the notions that will be described. There are Navaho intellectuals (mainly the singers of their ceremonials), and the more explicit systematic statements have been derived in part from talks with them. Yet it is maintained that "average" Navahos think and act in accord with these premises and concepts, even though they would be hard put to explain them in the fashion carried out here.

### *Implicit Philosophy*

There is a unifying philosophy behind the way of life of every individual at any given point in his history. Although each personality gives to this philosophy an idiosyncratic coloring, this is primarily in its affective or felt dimensions. The main outlines of the fundamental assumptions and basic abstractions have only exceptionally been created out of the stuff of unique biological heredity and peculiar life experience. They are usually cultural products. From the life-ways that constitute the designs for living of his community or tribe or region or socioeconomic class or nation or civilization the ordinary individual derives most of his "mental outlook."

Cultures or group life-ways do not manifest themselves solely in observable customs and artifacts. There is much more to social and cultural phenomena than immediately meets the ear and eye. If the behavioral facts are to be correctly understood, certain presuppositions constituting what might be termed a philosophy or ideology must also be known. The "strain toward consistency" which Sumner noted in the folkways and mores of all groups cannot be accounted for unless one postulates a more or less systematic pattern of reaction to experience as a characteristic property of all integrated cultures. In a certain deep sense the logic (that is, the *manner* of interpreting relationships between phenomena) of all members of the human species is the same. It is the premises that are different. Moreover, the premises are learned as part of a cultural tradition.

Synthesis within a culture is achieved partly through the overt

statement of the dominant conceptions, assumptions, and aspirations of the group in its religious lore, secular thought, and ethical code; partly through unconscious apperceptive habits, ways of looking at the stream of events that are so taken for granted as seldom or never to be verbalized explicitly. These habitual ways of begging certain questions that are distinctive of different cultures may be clearly crystallized in the morphology of the language. For example, the tense system of European languages points to the enormous emphasis upon time in Western culture. To the outsider who is a student of the culture these linguistic forms may constitute invaluable clues to the structure of the implicit culture. But to the naïve participants in the culture these modes of categorizing, of dissecting experience along these planes and not others, are as much "given" as the regular sequence of natural phenomena or the necessity of air, water, and food for life.

Every group's way of life, then, is a structure—not a haphazard collection of all the different physically possible and functionally effective patterns of belief and action but an interdependent system based upon linked premises and categories whose influence is greater rather than less because they are seldom brought out into explicit discussion. Some degree of internal coherence which is apperceived rather than rationally constructed seems to be demanded by most of the participants in any culture. As Whitehead has remarked, "Human life is driven forward by its dim apprehension of notions too general for its existing language."

In sum, the way of life that is handed down as the social heritage of every people does more than supply a set of skills for making a living and a set of blueprints for human relations. Each different way of life makes its own assumptions about the ends and purposes of human existence, about ways by which knowledge may be obtained, about the organization of the pigeonholes in which each sense datum is filed, about what human beings have a right to expect from each other and the gods, about what constitutes fulfillment or frustration. Some of these assumptions are made explicit in the lore of the folk; others are tacit premises which the observer must infer by finding consistent trends in word and deed.

In highly self-conscious Western civilization that has recently made a business of studying itself, the number of assumptions that are literally implicit in the sense of never having been stated or discussed by anyone may be negligible. Yet only a trifling number of Americans could state even those implicit premises of our culture that have been dissected out by social scientists. I remember an astute remark by Lloyd Warner: "If you could bring to the American Scene an Australian aborigine who had been socialized in his own culture and then trained in social science, he would perceive all sorts of patterned regularities of which our sociologists are completely unaware."

In the case of the less sophisticated and less self-conscious societies,

the unconscious assumptions characteristically made by individuals brought up under approximately the same social controls will bulk large. The Navaho do talk about their ethical principles and their values. Navaho intellectuals discuss the purposes of life and the principles that govern the universe. But many distinctively Navaho doings and sayings make sense only if they are related to certain implicit convictions about the nature of human life and experience, convictions so deep-going that no Navaho thinks of talking about them in so many words. These unstated assumptions are so completely taken for granted that the Navaho (like all peoples) take these views of life as an ineradicable part of human nature and find it hard to understand that normal persons could possibly conceive life in other terms. Much of what will be said in the two following sections is at this level. This implicit philosophy is an inferential construct based on consistencies in observed thought and action patterns.

### *Underlying Premises*

The keystones on which the Navaho view of the world appears to rest may be stated schematically as follows:

1. The universe is orderly: all events are caused and interrelated.
  - a. Knowledge is power.
  - b. The basic quest is for harmony.
  - c. Harmony can be restored by orderly procedures.
  - d. One price of disorder, in human terms, is illness.
2. The universe tends to be personalized.
  - a. Causation is identifiable in personalized terms.
3. The universe is full of dangers.
4. Evil and good are complementary, and both are ever present.
5. Experience is conceived as a continuum differentiated only by sense data.
6. Morality is conceived in traditionalistic and situational terms rather than in terms of abstract absolutes.
7. Human relations are premised upon familistic individualism.
8. Events, not actors or qualities, are primary.

Each of these presuppositions now needs to be elaborated and, in some instances, qualified. Up to a point the Navaho may be legitimately described as a "primitive mechanist." On the other hand, one does encounter some teleological notions. It is generally agreed that Changing Woman created livestock and other goods for the benefit of the Navaho. Some accounts state that death was created so that "everything would be coming new," that the earth would not get too crowded with people and with livestock. The myth with respect to livestock is obviously post-

European, and there are other grounds for suspecting the influence of Christian theology in all versions that attribute an all-embracing purposeful design to the divinities. Recently created myths of flood and of the impending end of the world probably also have an indirect Christian source.

In general, Navaho philosophy makes small provision for teleology and for mysticism. History is not oriented in accord with the master design of all-wise and all-powerful beings; events are the inevitable results of previous events. Visionaries do occasionally appear in Navaho lore and legends. But they did not themselves seek mystical experience; the visions were caused, not willed. The ideas of fasting, self-torture, and pity that were so popular among Plains Indians seem ridiculous to earthy, hedonistic Navahos. Rites of purification occur in the curing ceremonies, but this is not a case of the individual's seeking mystical enlightenment. He is only following a cultural pattern that has nothing to do with his private motives.

It should be noted, however, that the Navaho, although they usually think in terms of mechanical causation, are not thorough-going positivists. They do lay great stress on immediately apprehended sense data. This life is what counts, and experience is not defined mystically but in terms of one's sensations of pain and pleasure and of the existence of persons and objects outside oneself. On the other hand, mountains and other natural phenomena have their "inner forms" as well as the properties obtained from introspection of a succession of sense data. Words, as well as things and processes, are important. Mastery of an exoteric terminology gives one power over supernatural forces, objects, and events to which the terms refer.

*The universe is orderly.* Everything in the universe is interrelated. It is a lawful universe. The notion of causation is essentially mechanical. Although at the beginning of things certain happenings occurred at the will of the divinities, they themselves were henceforth bound by the consequences of their own acts. Once the machine had been started, it ran according to irreversible laws. There is no place in Navaho thought for a god who can capriciously (from the Navaho point of view) grant the petition of humans. The divinities, too, follow the rules. Every event has one or more specifiable causes. If rain does not fall at the expected season it is because "people are too mean" or because "whites are selling liquor to the Navahos." As Dr. Reichard has written: "The balance of all things may break down because of man's own behavior in breaking taboos, because of ghosts and witchcraft, or because of foreign influences, all matters which are considered as being 'out of order.'" However, it should be noted at once that possible causes are multitudinous. Hence, one must not be too disappointed if a ceremonial cure is not successful. There are causes, but identification is not easy. The universe



is determinate, but human thought is not determinate. "Perhaps" is one of the words most frequently uttered in Navaho.

There is even in Navaho behavior a touch of the experimental, of the utterly pragmatic. Before committing himself to an expensive nine-day ceremonial the sick individual will try out a brief excerpt. Only if it works will he go on to the full version. Some (though not all) singers will freely admit what certainly goes on in practice: a new herbal medicine or song or bit of equipment will be tried out in a ceremonial; if the results are satisfactory, the new business will be incorporated as a standard procedure and taught to learners of the rite. Whole new ceremonials have been borrowed from neighboring tribes, slightly adapted, kept or discarded on the basis of experience. In secular life the Navaho is prone to try anything once. New foods, clothing, and gadgets are taken over with a freedom that contrasts sharply with the resistance of the Pueblo Indians to innovation.

*Knowledge is power.* The conception of "good luck" is hard to translate into the Navaho language. In their scheme of things one is not "lucky" or "unlucky." One has the requisite knowledge (sacred or profane) or one hasn't. Even in what European languages call "games of chance" the Navaho depends upon medicines, rites, and verbal formulas. The same is true with hunting. Getting a deer is never a matter of good fortune; it is a matter of ritual knowledge and of one's relations with supernaturals which, again, are controllable.

Complete knowledge, however, is unattainable: "Not even the white people who have been everywhere, go across the ocean, fly in the sky, can see all things and places—even up in the sky—not even they know where the sunrise is nor where the sunset is. Nor will they ever find out." While man can never hope completely to understand and control his destiny, he can, once he learns the right formulas, coerce even supernatural beings, for they too are subject to the lawful processes that control events. If the right mechanical procedures are followed, the divinities *must* restore the patient to health and harmonious living.

*The basic quest is for harmony.* In so far as Navaho philosophy is goal-oriented, it is directed toward the elimination of friction in human relations and toward the restoration of harmony in that total economy of things in which human affairs constitute only one facet. In the Navaho conception of the relationship between their divinities there is the mechanical notion of a balance of opposing forces. No one divine being has unfettered control over the others. Each is limited by the powers of others as well as by the remorseless working out of processes beyond the control of the whole pantheon. In this equilibrium of forces human effort in the form of observance of taboos and in the performance of compulsive rituals can play its part. Individually acquired knowledge

can assist in the restoration of harmony in one person's life, in that of the community, in that of the whole universe.

This dominant conception of balance is reflected in the scrupulous symmetry of ceremonials, formal narratives, and art. Poetry is constructed in the fugue and coda style. In dry paintings, rugs, and silver-work an element rarely appears singly. There is a pair, or more often a group of four. In songs and prayers there are numberless balanced repetitions, four again being the favorite pattern:

That before us there being beauty as we shall walk about, we have told our stories to each other. That behind us there being beauty as we shall walk about, we have told our stories to each other. That below us there being beauty as we shall walk about, we have told our stories to each other. That all about us there being beauty as we shall walk about, we have told our stories to each other.

That our speech will become beautiful, we have told our stories to each other. That out of our mouths there will come beauty, we have told our stories to each other. That we shall walk about in beauty, we have told our stories to each other. That we shall walk about being "that which goes about at the rim of old age," we have told our stories to each other.

That today we are the children of the Earth, we have told our stories to each other. That we are the child of the Black Sky, we have told our stories to each other. That we are the children of the Sun, we have told our stories to each other. That we are the children of the White Shell Woman, we have told our stories to each other. That we are the children of the Changing Woman, we have told our stories to each other. That we are the children of the Talking God, we have told our stories to each other. That we are the grandchildren of the Hogan God, we have told our stories to each other.

Let there be beauty indeed. Let there be beauty indeed.

Let there be beauty indeed. Let there be beauty indeed.

Divinities in all forms of symbolism tend to turn up in pairs or fours (Changing Woman, White Shell Woman, Salt Woman, Turquoise Woman; Monster Slayer and Child of the Water). The final example is a pairing of older and younger—a repeated theme in Navaho culture. Another common form of balance is that between the sexes. Each male divinity has a female counterpart in a dry painting. There are male rains and female rains; male rivers and female rivers; male turquoise and female turquoise; male chants and female chants; male plants and female plants. In part, this is not so much a duality of the sexes as such but rather the complementary nature of stronger and weaker, dominant and submissive, etc.

*One price of disorder is illness.* In every ceremonial there is a patient ("one sung over"), although all rites, and some in particular, have purposes that go beyond the individual to the group and indeed to the

whole world. Illness is not traced to what Europeans would consider "natural" causes. Even a broken limb from an accident may have a deeper etiology. Illness is one possible result of disharmony. The outward and visible form of the disharmony may be a disturbance in human relations, but this, in turn, is the manifestation of malequilibrium in the patient's relations to supernatural forces. The social group, the rest of the animate and inanimate world, and the supernaturals are all part of one scheme. Anything that disturbs the balance of this system as a whole can produce malfunctioning in any part of the system. The symptom may be a physiological disturbance, social friction, lack of rainfall, or a flood.

*The universe tends to be personalized.* This if you like, is the familiar "animism." As a matter of fact, it is a broadly human tendency, found among peoples not considered "animistic." In contemporary American culture, for example, most persons find it psychologically more satisfying to blame "Wall Street operators" than "the laws of supply and demand," "Stalin's clique" than "Communist ideology." Navaho parallels are: "witches" as opposed to "bad weather," "the spirit of Old Age" as opposed to "physiological process." The Navahos, however, do carry the tendency further. Every feature of nature is animated and has some specific supernatural power. "The spirit of hunger kills me" is preferred to the intransitive "I am hungry." The English language describes the impersonal operation of natural forces, "I am drowning"; Navaho uses the active, personalized "water is killing me." Causes are not only identifiable; they are, up to a point, controllable in the way that people are controllable.

*The Universe is full of dangers.* Every realist is aware that the world is a dangerous place. But the Navaho is distinguished by the variety of threats from the unseen world that he fears and names. Navaho philosophy seems a little like that of the Eskimo who said, "We do not believe; we fear." To be sure, he has also learned from experience in his difficult physical environment that living is hard and dangerous. It should also be understood that this view is interpreted in terms of the first premise. It is part of the nature of things that life is difficult and hazardous. No Navaho ever curses a divinity or a "malign fate." He accepts, though he accepts cheered by the realization that *some* misfortunes can be averted by applying obtainable knowledge and thus influencing the course of events. From old age and death there is no escape, but most mischances result from "error which is either incomplete knowledge or carelessness in the observation of rules which constitute the lubricant to minimize friction in the operation of the universal machine" (Gladys Reichard).

*Evil and good are complementary, and both are ever present.* Some divinities can be influenced directly by human rituals, some only

indirectly, others not at all. Some of the Holy People continually have human interests at heart, but the Sun and Moon each continue to demand a life a day, and First Woman and First Man persist in malevolent activity. But all are necessary to the scheme of things. According to some informants, even the most respected singers must know a little witchcraft—"or they'll go dry." The conception of perfection of personality is not a Navaho abstraction. Some frailties are recorded even of Changing Woman, who, of the divine beings, most nearly approaches the idea of benevolence. The most cherished and respected of family members are thought to have some evil in them, so that when they die their ghosts are feared, though majority Navaho opinion says that the good person who died in a ripe old age is harmless.

*Experience is conceived as a continuum differentiated only by sense data.* The Navaho find no difficulty in distinguishing one horse from another. The language delights in categorizing the concrete in precise and neat fashion. However, where the senses fail to provide evidence of sharp gradations, the continuum, with one important exception, is undifferentiated. A Navaho cannot conceive of absolute good or of absolute evil, though perhaps it is misleading even to use these two words. The Navaho conceive of what is to be desired and what is to be feared more than of the morally approved and disapproved. That is, to say that a person has evil in him really means in Navaho terms that he has properties that are to be dreaded. At any rate, the two qualities of the sought and of the avoided shade into each other and blend. Categories like "the social," "the economic," "the political" baffle the schooled Navaho. Life is a whole. There is likewise no mind-body problem for the Navaho. Although there is a Navaho word which may be translated "mind" and another which may be tendered "body," the two are conceived as interdependent, with the "mind" (the "in-lying one") as dominant. If a person has bodily aches and pains, his "mind" must be treated. If his mental reactions are aberrant, his body must be put through the same procedures as the man who has a fever. Psychosomatic medicine is no startling discovery to the Navaho! The behavior of the warrior's wife at home is as relevant to his safety and success as are his own actions, for all are part of a continuum of interrelated events. Navaho thought abhors the clear-cut time distinctions that are so necessary to Western thinking. Things have only the isolability evidenced by immediate sense perception. Events seem to be thought of as points in a continuous pattern. When they are separated out from the pattern, all their aspects in vivid specificity are isolated as a whole. The type of abstraction that is the central feature of what Northrop has called the theoretic component is almost entirely lacking in Navaho thinking.

*Morality is conceived in traditionalistic and situational terms rather than in terms of abstract absolutes.* Conduct that is not defined by

custom or by rules involving the supernatural is ordinarily judged in terms of its practicality. But a pattern of conduct that has become invested with symbolic significance has its warrant in tradition rather than in rationality. "That is the old Navaho way." "Women must sit that way because the female Holy People used to sit that way." Any violation of the rules is a disruption of the harmony of things and a sure cause of trouble. There is no rain this year because the young men stamped their feet in the Girl's Dance, and that is not the old way. A woman is sick because she fired pottery in full sight of everyone. Since custom is king, public opinion and not "conscience" is the arbiter. Punishment is predominantly external, not internal. Navahos do not lie awake at night worrying about their secret sins. But the threat of being "shamed" by being publicly observed in a transgression of customs or the fear of setting in motion a set of supernatural sanctions is sufficient to induce proper behavior. The difference between Navaho morality and Christian morality is not at all that of the presence versus the absence of moral standards. It is rather a difference in the mechanisms for enforcing those standards.

Navaho morality is also contextual rather than absolute. This is characteristic of "shame" as opposed to "guilt" culture. Lying is not always and everywhere wrong. The rules vary with the situation. To deceive when trading with foreign tribes is a morally accepted practice. Acts are not in themselves bad or good. Incest is perhaps the only conduct that is condemned without qualification. It is quite correct to use witchcraft techniques in trading with members of foreign tribes. Behavior that is disapproved for a Navaho is acceptable for an outsider. There is an almost complete absence of abstract ideals. Under the circumstances of aboriginal life Navahos did not need to orient themselves in terms of abstract morality. They got their orientations from face-to-face contacts with the same small group of people with whom they have the overwhelming majority of their dealings from birth to death. In a large, complex society like modern America, where people come and go and business and other dealings must be carried on by people who never see each other, it is functionally necessary to have abstract standards that transcend an immediate concrete situation in which two or more persons are interacting.

*Human relations are premised upon familistic individualism.* The Navaho, particularly as contrasted with the Pueblo and some other communally oriented groups, is surely an individualist. Ceremonial knowledge is acquired—and paid for—by the individual. Certain animals in the family herd belong to definite persons. Some rites give considerable scope to individual self-expression. Yet this is equally certainly not the romantic individualism of American culture. No unacculturated Navaho

feels his independence sufficiently to break from his relatives. There is a great deal of ordinarily submerged hostility among family members, but in his cognitive picture of his world the Navaho insists that family life is the hub of interpersonal relations. He does not consider himself primarily as a member of a local community, nor of his tribe—let alone of the United States or of an international brotherhood. His conception of the ideal society is that of a stable equilibrium between various groups of related persons. One's first loyalty is neither to oneself nor to society in the abstract but rather, in attenuating degrees as one moves outward in the circle of kin, to one's biological and clan relatives.

*Events, not actors or qualities, are primary.* Navaho is overwhelmingly a verbal language. Most nouns may be thematic, and adjectives are slightly altered verbs. The most fundamental categories distinguish types of activity. Similarly, Navaho thinking is relentlessly concerned with doing, with happenings. This fits with the view of the universe as process, with the belief that effective action influences the process, with the emphasis on the interconnections between events, with the stress on situation as opposed to qualitative absolutes, with the animation attributed even to natural phenomena. It is very difficult in Navaho to make fine precisions as to attributes; it is all too easy to indicate a hundred variations as to how an act of going occurred. Doing—neither being nor becoming—is the keynote of Navaho thought.

### *Navaho Laws of Thought*

Navaho reasoning proceeds consciously or unconsciously from the above premises. It remains to specify the forms of logical processes recognized as valid. First, negatively, it should be observed that the Aristotelian laws of "identity" and "excluded middle" are only weakly and not consistently observed in Navaho thinking. One never hears a Navaho say "a thing either is or it isn't." "Both-and" is a more familiar form than "either-or"—to the extent that one can point to many examples of the thought process that Lévy-Bruhl designated as *participation mystique*.

The following positive logical canons are by no means distinctly Navaho, but they are so emphasized as to be of indispensable significance for the comprehension of their mental horizon. They need only be listed here, since they have been discussed so frequently in approximately the same form that they are encountered among the Navaho:

(a) Like produces like (e.g., the eagle flies swiftly so that the runner can well carry a bit of eagle down).

(b) A part can stand for a whole (e.g., witches can work upon hair or nail parings as effectively as upon the victim himself).

(c) *Post hoc ergo propter hoc* (e.g., the grass no longer grows as high as in the old days when taboos were strictly kept; therefore, the decrease in vegetation is caused by carelessness in observing the rules).

(d) Every subjective experience must have its demonstrable correlate in the sense world. (It is not enough for a Navaho to say "I *know* a witch is after me." Witch tracks must be found or dirt must fall mysteriously from the roof of the hut at night. All interpretations must be documented in terms of actual sensory events. The unacculturated Navaho has difficulty in adjusting to clock time. This is arbitrary and unconvincing because it is not based upon natural phenomena.)

### *Some Basic Navaho Categories*

In general the Navaho language is tremendously concrete. Referents of words are unusually delimited and precise. Verbalizations are taken with great literalness. Though some ordinary words have figurative connotations, loose denotations are uncommon, and, since most Navahos have had highly similar experiences associated with the same words, connotations do not spread over nearly as much territory as they do in English.

There are, however, some abstract words, extremely difficult to render adequately in English, which are of the greatest importance for the understanding of Navaho philosophy. Perhaps the most significant of these is conveyed by the Navaho root *hóǫ́-*. This is probably the central idea in Navaho religious thinking. It occurs in the names of two important ceremonials (Blessing Way and Beauty Way) and is frequently repeated in almost all prayers and songs. In various contexts it is best translated as "beautiful," "harmonious," "good," "blessed," "pleasant," and "satisfying." As a matter of fact, the difficulty with translation primarily reflects the poverty of English in terms that simultaneously have moral and esthetic meaning. A number of words in classical Greek come rather close.

Earlier it was remarked that the universe was not only lawful but also an interrelated whole. It is integration with the harmony of all forces, personal and impersonal—a harmony that includes both good and evil—that is sought in Blessing Way. It is sought not only for the individual patient but also for his family and for all present at the rite and indeed for all living beings (animal, human, and divine; Navaho and non-Navaho) and all natural phenomena (rivers, mountains, winds, lightning, and the like). The harmony exists, but no person, human or divine, can hope for complete and permanent participation in it:

When my spiritual power was strong, I came up with it  
When I was holy, I came up with it

"Second Song of the Flood"

For a limited period a personality can become identified with this harmony, and the integration of all forces in it can be improved by performances of the ceremonial.

It is to be noted that this term is applied to a human being only while he is in a sacred situation (i.e., singer or patient in a ceremonial). This in itself implies that the state is not permanently attainable. It also implies that the word means something different from the actually realizable condition of relative moral goodness. "Holiness" is sharply distinct from "goodness." The descriptive adjectives that designate individuals who are "good" (in the simply moral nonesthetic sense) have reference to a number of different qualities. The most general concept seems to include the notions of industry, responsibility (especially to one's relatives), frugality-generosity, strength-hardihood, pleasant disposition, avoidance of excess of any kind, tending to one's own affairs.

The conception of evil also has separate profane and sacred dimensions. The root, *hóčó-*, however, is not a precise antithesis of *hóžó-*. It does not refer explicitly to disorder as *hóžó-* refers to harmony. Rather, its primary reference is to the malevolent activities of ghosts and witches who are the living embodiments of evil of the sacred variety. Ceremonials of Evil Way type (intended to free the patients from ghost or witch attack) are *hóčó:ží* which is sometimes translated "Ghost Way." Various words applied to persons who are disapproved of in the profane sense refer to qualities the opposite of those listed for the good person. Individuals who commit incest are abhorred and suspect of witchcraft. To be sure, some connection between the categories is evidenced. Those who are violent, lazy, irresponsible, meddlesome are more often accused of witchcraft than is the average Navaho. On the other hand, singers and the rich and powerful (who are at least industrious and strong) are still more frequently mentioned as witches.

Another basic concept of the sacred world is that of "immunity." The patient in a Holy Way ceremonial becomes identified with the Holy People of that rite, hence holy himself, hence immune to further attack from these divinities. This conception is, of course, congruent with the premise that many dangers can be averted through employment of the proper mechanical means. The word, *diyín*, which is rendered above as "immune" may also in certain contexts be translated as "holy" or "sacred." "Charged with positive spiritual electricity" suggests in not too far-fetched a manner the core of the Navaho concept. One whole group of Navaho ceremonials is called the Holy (*diyín*) Way group. One class of divinities is referred to as the Holy People (*diyín diné*).

The category "property" is very prominent and has some special Navaho subdivisions: "hard goods," "soft goods," "flexible goods," etc. The Navaho concept of "place" is unusual and impossible to convey briefly and directly. Every thing and every act has spatial position which



must be specified with great precision. Myths are replete with long lists of place names that are as tiresome to the foreigner as the "catalogue of Ships" in the *Iliad*. Each verb has a special third person form that grammarians call "place person." Other secular categories tend to follow the lines set rather obviously by the visible world. Except for certain plant groups, there is little lumping in accord with use or function as contrasted with divisions derivable from descriptive physical features.

The absence of various abstract categories that are familiar to whites should be mentioned. It is not surprising in a "shame" culture that there is no notion of "sin." Nor can the Navaho easily conceive of "laying up treasures in Heaven." Indeed there is no heaven in our sense. The after-world is a colorless, unattractive place according to Navaho thought. In the native ideology there is no concept analogous to our "personal success." Parents urge their children to be industrious, but this is in order that they may gain "security" or "relative harmony." The attainment of some goal through the correct employment of ritual means is also stressed, of course. Personal ambition—as abstracted from family welfare—is a foreign notion. Prestige for some activities, yes. But the Navaho characteristically shrinks from formal leadership, from being marked out as above his fellows. A hierarchical rating of human beings is avoided as much as is a hierarchy of divinities.

The European concept of personality has little if any counterpart in Navaho thought. There are words that may be translated "in-standing" or "in-lying" beings which express an idea that—in certain respects only—is similar to that of a soul. In Navaho conception a wind is blown into the conceived or born body of a human which is an entirely separate unit from the body. The body is animated and activated by the "in-standing one." This "in-standing one" is responsible for the actions of the individual, though not in a sense that Christians would define as "morally responsible." For instance, a child may become ill as the result of actions of the parents during pregnancy. However, an individual is thought to be mean, gentle, one-eyed, left- or right-handed because of the qualities of the "in-standing one."

There is no notion that a *persona* is a composite of "body and soul" in the sense that the union of the wind with the babe's body creates a person ("*homo hic et nunc*" or "*sic et sic*"). The in-lying one of Blanca Peak does not mean that this being and the respective physical mountain result in a specific personality. In the human case, at death the in-lying being is separated forever from that body. In life, if the in-lying one is sick (i.e., out of harmony) this can affect the body which the in-lying one activates. However, no ceremonial expiates a crime or makes provision for *expiation* of unethical actions. Since there is no total personality that is *morally* responsible, transgressions of taboos, clan code, and

the like are not reacted to by the offender in terms of a "guilty conscience."

The concept *bahadzid* ("for it there is fear") is congruent with assumptions of causality, lack of personal *moral* responsibility, and the like. The word may be varyingly translated as "dangerous," "tabooed," "restricted." It is, if you like, "negative *mana*." That is, certain objects, events, and persons are charged with negative power. If they are not approached circumspectly, they backfire with enormous destructive force.

Limitations of space make it impossible to discuss all basic Navaho concepts. The ones considered above seem to be especially important in Navaho thought and also very representative.

### *Navaho Ethical Code and Values*

We now come to that portion of Navaho philosophy which even the average Navaho can present explicitly. The very fact that the Navaho find it necessary to talk about their ethical principles suggests that not everybody lives up to them (any more than is the case in white society). But this code is largely the working out in concrete terms of the principles inherent in the absolute logic that have been discussed.

In no human group is indiscriminate lying, cheating, or stealing approved. Cooperation is of course impossible unless individuals can depend upon each other in defined circumstances. Societies differ in how they define the conditions under which lying or stealing is forgivable or tolerable or perhaps even demanded. In their general discussions the Navaho make virtues of telling the truth and of fair dealing much as white people do. In the advice fathers give their children, in the harangues of headmen at large gatherings, these types of action never fail to be extolled.

The difference in presentation by whites and Navahos lies in the reasons advanced. The Navaho never appeals to abstract morality or to adherence to divine principles. He stresses mainly the practical considerations: "If you don't tell the truth, your fellows won't trust you and you'll shame your relatives. You'll never get along in the world that way." Truth is never praised merely on the ground that it is "good" in a purely abstract sense, nor do exhortations ever take the form that the Holy People have forbidden cheating or stealing. Certain other acts are commanded or prohibited on the basis that one or more of the Holy People did or did not behave in a similar fashion, but never in the modes which would seem "natural" to Christians: "Do this to please the Holy People because they love you," or "Don't do this because the Holy People punish wrongdoing." The Navahos do most definitely believe that

acts have consequences, but the nature of the consequence is not wrapped up in any intrinsic "rightness" or "wrongness" of the act itself. In the matters of truth and honesty the only appeal to the sentiments (other than those of practicality and getting along with relatives and neighbors) which Navaho "moralists" permit themselves is that of loyalty to tradition. The old Navaho way was not to lie, to cheat, or to steal. The prevalence of such vices today, they say, is due to white corruption. So much for the theory.

When it comes to practice, it is harder to put the finger on the difference between Navaho and white patterns. One gets the impression that Navahos lie to strangers or indeed to their relatives with fewer qualms than the average well-socialized white adult would feel. (However, the white adult's easy acceptance of "white lies" must not be overlooked.) There are also occasions on which stealing is mostly condoned "if you can get away with it." Again, though, a qualification must be entered; in many parts of the Navaho country one can have an automobile containing valuable articles unlocked for days and return to find not a single item missing. Thefts occur chiefly in the areas under strongest white influence, especially now at "squaw dances" frequented by ne'er-do-well young men who are souls lost between the two cultures. There is undoubted evidence that white contact brings about—at least in the transitional generations—some breakdown in the moralities. This much, however, seems to be a distinctive part of the native attitude: a Navaho does not spend much time worrying over a lie or a theft when he is not found out; he seems to have almost no "guilt" feelings; but if he is caught he does experience a good deal of shame. Ridicule is used to reinforce this sense of shame. The person who gets caught is the butt of many Navaho jokes.

Offenses more strongly condemned are those which threaten peaceful working together. The boaster and the troublemaker are strongly disapproved of. Incest and witchcraft are the worst of crimes. Murder, rape, physical injury, and any sort of violence are disapproved and punished, but some of the penalties seem relatively light to white people. By Navaho custom, murder, for instance, could be compounded for by a payment of slaves or livestock to the kin of the victim. To this day the Navaho way of dealing with violent crimes against the person is not ordinarily retaliation or even punishment of the offender but levying a fine which is turned over not to "the state" but to the sufferer and his family to compensate for the economic loss by injury or death.

The positive behaviors which are advocated center, as has been pointed out, on affectionate duty to relatives, pleasant manners to all, generosity, self-control, minding one's own business. The Navahos say: "Act to everybody as if they were your own relatives." A courteous, non-aggressive approach to others is the essence of decency. Polite phrases

to visitors and strangers are highly valued. If an English-speaking Navaho wishes to speak approvingly of another Navaho with whom he has had a chance encounter, he is likely to say, "He talks pretty nice." Quiet strength is highly valued. "Make your mind into something that is hard." Generosity is uniformly praised and stinginess despised. One of the most disparaging things which can be said of anyone is, "He gets mad like a dog." Women will be blamed for "talking rough" to their children. The Navaho word which is most often translated into English as "mean" is sometimes rendered "he gets mad pretty easy." In short, one must keep one's temper; one must warmly and cheerfully do one's part in the system of reciprocal rights and obligations, notably those which prevail between kinfolk.

Health and strength are perhaps the best of the good things of life for the Navaho. If you aren't healthy, you can't work; if you don't work, you'll starve. Industry is enormously valued. A family must arise and be about their tasks early, for if someone goes by and sees no smoke drifting out of the smokehole it will be thought that "there is something wrong there; somebody must be sick." In enumerating the virtues of a respected man or woman the faithful performance of duties is always given a prominent place. "If you are poor or a beggar, people will make fun of you. If you are lazy people will make fun of you."

By Navaho standards one is industrious in order to accumulate possessions—within certain limits—and to care for the possessions he obtains. Uncontrolled gambling or drinking are disapproved primarily because they are wasteful. The "good" man is one who has "hard goods" (turquoise and jewelry mainly), "soft goods" (clothing, etc.), "flexible goods" (textiles, etc.), and songs, stories, and other intangible property, of which ceremonial knowledge is the most important. An old Navaho said to W. W. Hill, "I have always been a poor man. I do not know a single song." The final disrespect is to say of a man, "Why, he hasn't even a dog."

A good appearance is valued; while this is partly a matter of physique, figure, and facial appearance, it means even more the ability to dress well and to appear with a handsome horse and substantial trappings.

Thus possessions are valued both as providing security and as affording opportunities for mild ostentation. But to take the attainment of riches as the chief aim of life is universally condemned. This is a typical pronouncement by a Navaho leader:

The Navaho way is just to want enough to have enough to eat for your family and nice things to wear sometimes. We don't like it when nowadays some of these young men marry rich girls for their money and waste it all right away. The old people say this is wrong. You can't get rich if you look after your rela-

tives right. You can't get rich without cheating some people. Cheating people is the wrong way. That way gets you into trouble. Men should be honest to get along.

Many skills carry prestige: the ability to dance, to sing, to tell stories. Skill at speaking is important and is expected of all leaders. "He talks easy" is high praise. Conversely, "He doesn't talk easy. He just sits there," is a belittling remark. Training in certain occupations is emphasized: a man will spend all the time he can spare from subsistence activities in order to learn a ceremonial; grandmothers and mothers are expected to teach young girls to weave. Knowledge is power to Navahos as to other peoples, but the kinds of knowledge which are significant to the Navaho are naturally limited by his technology and his social organization. The skillful farmer or stockman is admired. So also is he who excels at cowboy sports, but the runner comes in for his meed of praise too, even though this skill is today of minimum social utility.

Personal excellence is thus a value, but personal "success" in the white American sense is not. The Navaho lack of stress upon the success goal has its basis in childhood training but is reinforced by various patterns of adult life. A white man may start out to make a fortune and continue piling it up until he is a millionaire, where a Navaho, though also interested in accumulating possessions, will stop when he is comfortably off, or even sooner, partly for fear of being called a witch if he is too successful. This statement represents tendency rather than literal fact, for a few Navahos have in this century built up fortunes that are sizable even by white standards. The attitudes of the Navaho population generally toward these "ricos" are very mixed. Envy, fear, and distrust of them are undoubtedly mingled with some admiration. But there is almost no disposition for parents to hold these individuals up as models to their children. No elder says, "If you work hard and intelligently you might get to be as rich as Chee Dodge."

Navaho ideas of accumulation are different from those of whites. Riches are not ordinarily identified so much with a single individual as with the whole extended family and "outfit." Indeed the social pressure to support and share with relatives has a strong leveling effect. The members of a well-off family must also spend freely, as in the white pattern of "conspicuous consumption." But all wealth is desired for this purpose and for security rather than as a means of enhancing the power and glory of specific individuals.

That individual success is not a Navaho value is reflected also in the avoidance of the types of leadership which are familiar in white society. To the Navaho it is fundamentally indecent for a single individual to presume to make decisions for a group. Leadership, to them, does not mean "outstandingness." Each individual is controlled not by sanctions

from the top of a hierarchy of persons but by lateral sanctions. Decisions at meetings must be unanimous.

Some personal values which bulk large among whites have a place among the Navaho that is measured largely by the degree of white influence. Cleanliness, for instance, is an easy virtue where there is running water, but where every drop must be hauled five miles washing is an expensive luxury. Navaho social and economic life is not geared to fine points of time scheduling. If a Singer says he will arrive "about noon," no one takes it amiss that he appears at sundown, though an arrival a day or more late would call for explanation. Work is not, as it is in our Puritan tradition, a good thing in itself. The Navaho believes in working only as much as he needs to. Industry is praised only as a means to providing decently for one's family and oneself.

In sum, the Navaho concept of "goodness" stresses productiveness, ability to get along with people, dependability and helpfulness, generosity in giving and spending. "Badness" means stinginess, laziness, being "mean" to others, being destructive. The concept of value stresses possessions and their care, health, skills which are practically useful. Concerning all of these topics the Navaho are fully articulate. Such sentiments are enunciated again and again in the oral literature, in formal addresses, and in ordinary conversations. As John Dewey has remarked, "Ideals are goals which, though never completely attained, set the direction of intelligent effort."

### *The Impact of an Alien Ideology*

Personal and social disorganization is rampant among the Navaho people today. In part this is the consequence of objective facts. Navaho country is overpopulated, and the range is overgrazed. Few Navahos have the occupational skills to compete with whites in the near-by towns and cities. But that Navaho culture is becoming an ugly patchwork of meaningless and unrelated pieces instead of a patterned mosaic is due at least as much to the power of foreign ideas. The Navaho recognize and respect the strength of white American culture. Many Navahos are saying frankly that their tribe's salvation rests in mastering the language and the way of life of the dominant group. The lack of selective blending and constructive fusion is not due to low intelligence. Navahos are perfectly capable of learning white skills and white customs. But when the traits of another culture are learned externally and one by one without the underlying concepts and premises of that culture, the learners feel uncomfortable. They sense the absence of the fitness of things, of a support which is nonetheless real because difficult to verbalize.

The adoption of our ideas is not, of course, due solely to choice on the part of Navahos. Missionaries, government officials, and traders are

consciously and systematically trying to redeem the Navaho from "savagery." Some programs have conscientiously endeavored to take account of individual Navaho customs and even of the more external patterns of Navaho life. But because they have taken no account of underlying Navaho philosophy they have often produced results regarded as unfortunate by Navahos and whites alike. The rationally desirable innovations have failed to configure correctly with the unconscious system of meanings characteristic of Navaho implicit culture.

This is no new experience in planned culture change. Many attempts at acculturating on the part of missionary groups have had the (to the planners) unexpected consequences of contributing to the reinvigoration of basically aboriginal religions. Education in white values in government schools has promoted "rugged individualism" without the limiting and integrating controls which the white American absorbs in the home as part of his largely un verbalized philosophy. Such phrases as "compatibility with the pre-existing culture of the borrowers" are frequent in discussions of acculturation, and they are necessitated by the universal experience of students of culture that, over and above the cases of externally observable pattern conflict, there are less tangible forms of compatibility "that you can't quite put your finger on." These relate to lack of congruence between the implicit ideological systems. It is as if there were forces "behind" the explicit culture which made for acceptance of one foreign idea but for rejection of the associated ideas that contribute to discipline and control of behavior. Certainly ideas are retailored with subtle distortion of borrowed patterns of thought and behavior to swing them into line with remarkably tenacious underlying ideas.

There is not space to follow out in detail the ways in which Western conceptions have disturbed or destroyed the relatively smooth fabric of Navaho social life. Let us look merely at some aspects of the effects of white premises and categories with respect to individualism, government, economic institutions, sex, and property. It will be easier to follow out the course of events in these rather concrete realms than to trace, at this time, the effects of ideas from Western culture upon Navaho ideas. The less tangible, more implicit aspects of Navaho philosophy have undoubtedly been altered by the impact of Christianity, for example, but the underlying premises and concepts change more slowly than does behavior. Nevertheless, it is clear that many contemporary deviations make sense only if understood in terms of the influence of Christian notions of individualism, personal responsibility, sex code, and the like.

The category "government," something fixed and powerful to white people, is foreign to Navaho thinking. Authority, to their minds, extends only indefinitely and transitorily beyond the established rules of behavior between sex groups, age groups, and, especially, classes of relatives.

There are headmen, but the sphere of their influence widens and narrows with the passage of time, the emergence of a new leader, the rise of a new faction. The prestige of some headmen often spreads beyond their own local region. Through channels excessively informal they can sometimes "swing" most of the population of a number of local groups to a given course of action. By and large, however, control of individual action rests in the group and not in any authoritative individual or body.

The whole mechanism of Navaho social control is too fluid, too informal, too vague to be readily understood by white people who think of authority in terms of courts, police, and legislative assemblies. But Navaho social controls are extremely effective for those who remain within their own group. Never to be lost sight of is the fact that the basis of the system was and still is the family. To live at all in this barren region the individual must have the economic cooperation of others, and such cooperation is hardly likely to come to those who deviate from the "right way of doing things" as the Navaho see it. Thus the major threat which restrains the potential offender is the withdrawal of the support and the good will of his neighbors, most of whom are "family" to the Navaho. Gossip and criticism were and are major means of social control throughout Navaho society. These diffuse sanctions are less effective today than in former times because, by taking up wage work for whites, the offender can escape both the need for economic cooperation by the group and the criticism which the group aims at deviators.

The introduction of the white idea of individualism without the checks and balances that accompany it leads to the failure of collective or cooperative action of every sort. The substitution of paid labor for reciprocal services is not in and of itself a bad thing. But there is not a commensurate growth of the white idea of individual responsibility. There tends to be a distortion of the whole cultural structure which makes it difficult to preserve harmonious personal relationships and satisfying emotional adjustments. Widespread exercise of escape mechanisms, especially alcohol, is the principal symptom of the resultant friction and decay. Human groups that have different cultures and social structures have moral systems that differ in important respects. The linkage is so great that when a social organization goes to pieces morality also disintegrates.

A typical cause for confusion, distrust, and hostility arising out of a difference in the system of categories is the fact that Navahos are today dependent upon a distant and mysterious white institution called "the market." In the days of bartering raw materials, a sheep or a sack of wool maintained a rather constant value. At present, when both are sold to the trader, the Navaho never know in advance whether the lamb will bring ten cents a pound or only five cents, and they see no sense in these



variations. They share the common distrust of farmer folk for those who buy and resell the products of their hard labors, but they are at a greater disadvantage than the white farmer because they are unfamiliar with white marketing customs and have no means of understanding the reasons for the apparently senseless fluctuations in price and demand. Moreover, since they feel that they usually are underpaid for their sheep and wool and that the price they will get varies with no rhyme or reason, they feel uncertain about improving their products. Why should they invest money, labor, and time simply to benefit the trader or the more remote livestock dealers? Similar confusion and irritation resulted from the government's program of killing "excess" livestock. From the Navaho point of view only production is ethical. Destruction—except to satisfy immediate hunger—is unethical.

The Navaho have only "object taboos" as regards sex, none of the "aim taboos" which are so marked a development of Western culture. That is, Navahos do feel that sexual activity is improper or dangerous under particular circumstances or with certain persons. But they never regard sexual desires in themselves as "nasty" or evil. In school and elsewhere whites have tended to operate upon the premise that "any decent Navaho" will feel guilty about the sexual act which takes place outside of marriage. This attitude simply bewilders Navahos and predisposes them to withdrawal of cooperation in all spheres. To them sex is natural, necessary, and no more or no less concerned with morals than is eating.

The Navaho and the white administrator may see the same objective facts, and communication may be sufficiently well established so that each is sure the other sees them. Naturally, then there is mutual irritation when the same conclusions are not reached. What neither realizes is that all discourse proceeds from premises and that premises (unfortunately taken for granted by both) are likely, in fact, to be very divergent.

Let us put this in the concrete. A wealthy man dies and leaves considerable property. He has a widow but no children by her. There are, however, two sons by another woman to whom the deceased was never married in either white or Navaho fashion. He left, of course, no written will, and it is agreed that he gave no oral instructions on his deathbed. These are the facts, and there is no dispute about them between the Navaho and the white administrator.

Nevertheless the prediction may safely be made that before the estate is settled the white man will be irritated more than once and some Navahos will be confused and indignant at what seems to them ignorance, indifference, or downright immorality. Each will unconsciously make his judgments and decisions in terms of his own presuppositions. Neither set of premises will be brought out into the open and discussed as such, but the following unstated assumptions will be in the background of thinking:

*White**Navaho*

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Marriage is an arrangement, economic and otherwise, between two individuals. The two spouses and the children, if any, are the ones primarily involved in any question of inheritance.</li> <li>2. A man's recognized children, legitimate or illegitimate, have a claim upon his property.</li> <li>3. Inheritance is normally from the father or from both sides of the family.</li> <li>4. As long as a wife or children survive, no other relatives are concerned in the inheritance unless there was a will to that effect.</li> <li>5. All types of property are inherited in roughly the same way.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Marriage is an arrangement between two families much more than it is between two individuals.</li> <li>2. Sexual rights are property rights; therefore if a man has children from a woman without undertaking during his lifetime the economic responsibilities which are normally a part of Navaho marriage, the children—however much he admitted to biological fatherhood—were not really his: "He just stole them."</li> <li>3. Inheritance is normally from the mother, the mother's brother, or other relatives of the mother; from the father's side of the family little or nothing has traditionally been expected. Most of the father's property goes back to his relatives.</li> <li>4. While children today, in most areas, expect to inherit something from their father, they do not expect to receive his whole estate or to divide it with their mother only; sons and daughters have different expectations.</li> <li>5. Different rules apply to different types of property: range land is hardly heritable property at all; farm land normally stays with the family which has been cultivating it; livestock usually goes back (for the most part) to the father's sisters and sororal nephews; jewelry and other personal property tend to be divided among the children and other relatives; ceremonial equipment may go to a son who is a practitioner or to a clansman of the deceased.</li> </ol> |
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The white administrator would be likely to say that the only heirs to any of the property were the wife, children, and perhaps the illegiti-

mate children. Such a decision would be perplexing or infuriating to the Navaho. To say in the abstract what disposal would be proper at the present complicated point in Navaho history is hardly possible. But it is clear that a verdict which seemed so "right" and "natural" to a white person as to require no explanation or justification would probably appear equally "unjust" and "unreasonable" to the Navaho involved.

The pressure of such double standards is highly disruptive. Just as rats that have been trained to associate a circle with food and a rectangle with an electric shock become neurotic when the circle is changed by almost imperceptible gradations into an ellipse, so human beings faced with a conflicting set of rewards and punishments tend to cut loose from all moorings, to float adrift, and become irresponsible. The younger generation of the Navaho are more and more coming to laugh at the old or pay them only lip service. The young escape the control of their elders, not to accept white controls but to revel in newly found patterns of unrestraint.

The Navaho are torn between their own ancient standards and those which are urged upon them by teachers, missionaries, and other whites. An appreciable number of Navahos are so confused by the conflicting precepts of their elders and their white models that they tend, in effect, to reject the whole problem of morality (in the widest sense) as meaningless or insoluble. For longer or shorter periods in their lives their only guide is the expediency of the immediate situation. One cannot play a game according to rule if there are sharp disagreements as to what the rules are. The incipient breakdown of any culture brings a loss of predictability and hence of dependability in personal relations. The absence of generally accepted standards of behavior among individuals constitutes, in fact, a definition of social disorganization.

A stable social structure prevails only so long as the majority of individuals in the society find enough satisfaction both in the goals socially approved and in the institutionalized means of attainment to compensate them for the constraints which ordered social life inevitably imposes upon uninhibited response to impulse. In any way of life there is much that to an outside observer appears haphazard, disorderly, more or less chaotic. But unless most participants feel that the ends and means of their culture make sense, in terms of a unifying philosophy, disorientation and amorality become rampant. Some major Navaho premises are incompatible with some major premises of our culture. A resolution must be sought in terms of wider assumptions.

In this chapter an attempt has been made to describe not only Navaho ethics and values but also some of those highest common factors that are implicit in a variety of the doings and sayings of the Navaho. In the not distant past these recurrent themes, these unstated premises, gave a felt coherence to life in spite of social change, in spite of the

diversity of institutions, in spite of differences in the needs and experiences of individuals. These distinctly Navaho values and premises still do much to regulate group life and to reconcile conflicts and discrepancies. But these basic assumptions are now under attack from a competing set of assumptions. The majority of Navahos no longer feel completely at home and at ease in their world of values and significances, and an appreciable minority are thoroughly disoriented. This will continue and increase until new coherent philosophical bases for life are created and widely accepted. As Merton has written, "It is the dominating system of ideas which determines the choice between alternative modes of action which are equally compatible with the underlying sentiments."

# 41 *The Virgin of Guadalupe: A Mexican National Symbol<sup>1</sup>*



Eric R. Wolf

HAVING DWELT ON THE RELIGIOUS ASPECT OF IDEOLOGY AND EVEN (IN II:39) *having considered scientific thought as part of ideology, we have neglected one of the most common meanings imputed to ideology in the modern world. Reference, of course, is to politics. Some mention of this problem was made in an earlier selection (II:26), but we are now afforded a closer look within the context of a complex modern nation-state. Indeed, it is precisely the complexities of class, religion and ethnicity in Mexico that supply the need for the complex symbolism of the Virgin of Guadalupe. We are also given some insight into a set of phenomena that is unfortunately otherwise neglected in these Readings, mythology. Much that Wolf has to say about the Virgin is applicable in a broad sense to the functions of myth and legend in other cultures.*

Occasionally, we encounter a symbol which seems to enshrine the major hopes and aspirations of an entire society. Such a master symbol is represented by the Virgin of Guadalupe, Mexico's patron saint. Dur-

<sup>1</sup> Parts of this paper were presented to the Symposium on Ethnic and National Ideologies, Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society in conjunction with the Philadelphia Anthropological Society, on 12 May 1956.

SOURCE: *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 71, No. 279 (1958), pp. 34-38. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publisher.

Eric R. Wolf (b. 1923) is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Michigan. Noted for his contributions to anthropological theory, Wolf has done fieldwork in Puerto Rico, Mexico, and in the Tyrol. He is the author of *Sons of the Shaking Earth* (1958), *Anthropology* (1964), and *Peasants* (1966).

ing the Mexican War of Independence against Spain, her image preceded the insurgents into battle. Emiliano Zapata and his agrarian rebels fought under her emblem in the Great Revolution of 1910. Today, her image adorns house fronts and interiors, churches and home altars, bull rings and gambling dens, taxis and buses, restaurants and houses of ill repute. She is celebrated in popular song and verse. Her shrine at Tepeyac, immediately north of Mexico City, is visited each year by hundreds of thousands of pilgrims, ranging from the inhabitants of far-off Indian villages to the members of socialist trade union locals. "Nothing to be seen in Canada or Europe," says F. S. C. Northrop, "equals it in the volume or the vitality of its moving quality or in the depth of its spirit of religious devotion."

In this paper, I should like to discuss this Mexican master symbol, and the ideology which surrounds it. In making use of the term "master symbol," I do not wish to imply that belief in the symbol is common to all Mexicans. We are not dealing here with an element of a putative national character, defined as a common denominator of all Mexican nationals. It is no longer legitimate to assume "that any member of the [national] group will exhibit certain regularities of behavior which are common in high degree among the other members of the society." Nations, like other complex societies, must, however, "possess cultural forms or mechanisms which groups involved in the same over-all web of relationships can use in their formal and informal dealings with each other." Such forms develop historically, hand in hand with other processes which lead to the formation of nations, and social groups which are caught up in these processes must become "acculturated" to their usage. Only where such forms exist, can communication and coördinated behavior be established among the constituent groups of such a society. They provide the cultural idiom of behavior and ideal representations through which different groups of the same society can pursue and manipulate their different fates within a coördinated framework. This paper, then, deals with one such cultural form, operating on the symbolic level. The study of this symbol seems particularly rewarding, since it is not restricted to one set of social ties, but refers to a very wide range of social relationships.

The image of the Guadalupe and her shrine at Tepeyac are surrounded by an origin myth. According to this myth, the Virgin Mary appeared to Juan Diego, a Christianized Indian of commoner status, and addressed him in Nahuatl. The encounter took place on the Hill of Tepeyac in the year 1531, ten years after the Spanish Conquest of Tenochtitlan. The Virgin commanded Juan Diego to seek out the archbishop of Mexico and to inform him of her desire to see a church built in her honor on Tepeyac Hill. After Juan Diego was twice unsuccessful in his efforts to carry out her order, the Virgin wrought a miracle. She bade

Juan Diego pick roses in a sterile spot where normally only desert plants could grow, gathered the roses into the Indian's cloak, and told him to present cloak and roses to the incredulous archbishop. When Juan Diego unfolded his cloak before the bishop, the image of the Virgin was miraculously stamped upon it. The bishop acknowledged the miracle, and ordered a shrine built where Mary had appeared to her humble servant.

The shrine, rebuilt several times in centuries to follow, is today a basilica, the third highest kind of church in Western Christendom. Above the central altar hangs Juan Diego's cloak with the miraculous image. It shows a young woman without child, her head lowered demurely in her shawl. She wears an open crown and flowing gown, and stands upon a half moon symbolizing the Immaculate Conception.

The shrine of Guadalupe was, however, not the first religious structure built on Tepeyac; nor was Guadalupe the first female supernatural associated with the hill. In pre-Hispanic times, Tepeyac had housed a temple to the earth and fertility goddess Tonantzin, Our Lady Mother, who—like the Guadalupe—was associated with the moon. Temple, like basilica, was the center of large scale pilgrimages. That the veneration accorded the Guadalupe drew inspiration from the earlier worship of Tonantzin is attested by several Spanish friars. F. Bernardino de Sahagún, writing fifty years after the Conquest, says: "Now that the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe has been built there, they call her Tonantzin too. . . . The term refers . . . to that ancient Tonantzin and this state of affairs should be remedied, because the proper name of the Mother of God is not Tonantzin, but Dios and Nantzin. It seems to be a satanic device to mask idolatry . . . and they come from far away to visit that Tonantzin, as much as before; a devotion which is also suspect because there are many churches of Our Lady everywhere and they do not go to them; and they come from faraway lands to this Tonantzin as of old." F. Martín de León wrote in a similar vein: "On the hill where Our Lady of Guadalupe is they adored the idol of a goddess they called Tonantzin, which means Our Mother, and this is also the name they give Our Lady and they always say they are going to Tonantzin or they are celebrating Tonantzin and many of them understand this in the old way and not in the modern way. . . ." The syncretism was still alive in the seventeenth century. F. Jacinto de la Serna, in discussing the pilgrimages to the Guadalupe at Tepeyac, noted: ". . . it is the purpose of the wicked to [worship] the goddess and not the Most Holy Virgin, or both together."

Increasingly popular during the sixteenth century, the Guadalupe cult gathered emotional impetus during the seventeenth. During this century appear the first known pictorial representations of the Guadalupe, apart from the miraculous original; the first poems are written in her honor; and the first sermons announce the transcendental implica-

tions of her supernatural appearance in Mexico and among Mexicans. Historians have long tended to neglect the seventeenth century which seemed "a kind of Dark Age in Mexico." Yet "this quiet time was of the utmost importance in the development of Mexican Society." During this century, the institution of the hacienda comes to dominate Mexican life. During this century, also, "New Spain is ceasing to be 'new' and to be 'Spain.'" These new experiences require a new cultural idiom, and in the Guadalupe cult, the component segments of Mexican colonial society encountered cultural forms in which they could express their parallel interests and longings.

The primary purpose of this paper is not, however, to trace the history of the Guadalupe symbol. It is concerned rather with its functional aspects, its roots and reference to the major social relationships of Mexican society.

The first set of relationships which I would like to single out for consideration are the ties of kinship, and the emotions generated in the play of relationships within families. I want to suggest that some of the meanings of the Virgin symbol in general, and of the Guadalupe symbol in particular, derive from these emotions. I say "some meanings" and I use the term "derive" rather than "originate," because the form and function of the family in any given society are themselves determined by other social factors: technology, economy, residence, political power. The family is but one relay in the circuit within which symbols are generated in complex societies. Also, I used the plural "families" rather than "family," because there is demonstrably more than one kind of family in Mexico. I shall simplify the available information on Mexican family life, and discuss the material in terms of two major types of families. The first kind of family is congruent with the closed and static life of the Indian village. It may be called the Indian family. In this kind of family, the husband is ideally dominant, but in reality labor and authority are shared equally among both marriage partners. Exploitation of one sex by the other is atypical; sexual feats do not add to a person's status in the eyes of others. Physical punishment and authoritarian treatment of children are rare. The second kind of family is congruent with the much more open, mobile, manipulative life in communities which are actively geared to the life of the nation, a life in which power relationships between individuals and groups are of great moment. This kind of family may be called the Mexican family. Here, the father's authority is unquestioned on both the real and the ideal plane. Double sex standards prevail, and male sexuality is charged with a desire to exercise domination. Children are ruled with a heavy hand; physical punishment is frequent.

The Indian family pattern is consistent with the behavior towards the Guadalupe noted by John Bushnell in the Matlazincas speaking com-



munity of San Juan Atzingo in the Valley of Toluca. There, the image of the Virgin is addressed in passionate terms as a source of warmth and love, and the *pulque* or century plant beer drunk on ceremonial occasions is identified with her milk. Bushnell postulates that here the Guadalupe is identified with the mother as a source of early satisfactions, never again experienced after separation from the mother and emergence into social adulthood. As such, the Guadalupe embodies a longing to return to the pristine state in which hunger and unsatisfactory social relations are minimized. The second family pattern is also consistent with a symbolic identification of Virgin and mother, yet this time with a context of adult male dominance and sexual assertion, discharged against submissive females and children. In this second context, the Guadalupe symbol is charged with the energy of rebellion against the father. Her image is the embodiment of hope in a victorious outcome of the struggle between generations.

This struggle leads to a further extension of the symbolism. Successful rebellion against power figures is equated with the promise of life; defeat with the promise of death. As John A. Mackay has suggested, there thus takes place a further symbolic identification of the Virgin with life; of defeat and death with the crucified Christ. In Mexican artistic tradition, as in Hispanic artistic tradition in general, Christ is never depicted as an adult man, but always either as a helpless child, or more often as a figure beaten, tortured, defeated and killed. In this symbolic equation we are touching upon some of the roots both of the passionate affirmation of faith in the Virgin, and of the fascination with death which characterizes Baroque Christianity in general, and Mexican Catholicism in particular. The Guadalupe stands for life, for hope, for health; Christ on the cross, for despair and for death.

Supernatural mother and natural mother are thus equated symbolically, as are earthly and otherworldly hopes and desires. These hopes center on the provision of food and emotional warmth in the first case, in the successful waging of the Oedipal struggle in the other.

Family relations are, however, only one element in the formation of the Guadalupe symbol. Their analysis does little to explain the Guadalupe as such. They merely illuminate the female and maternal attributes of the more widespread Virgin symbol. The Guadalupe is important to Mexicans not only because she is a supernatural mother, but also because she embodies their major political and religious aspirations.

To the Indian groups, the symbol is more than an embodiment of life and hope; it restores to them the hopes of salvation. We must not forget that the Spanish Conquest signified not only military defeat, but the defeat also of the old gods and the decline of the old ritual. The apparition of the Guadalupe to an Indian commoner thus represents on one level the return of Tonantzin. As Tannenbaum has well said, "The

Church . . . gave the Indian an opportunity not merely to save his life, but also to save his faith in his own gods." On another level, the myth of the apparition served as a symbolic testimony that the Indian, as much as the Spaniard, was capable of being saved, capable of receiving Christianity. This must be understood against the background of the bitter theological and political argument which followed the Conquest and divided churchmen, officials, and conquerors into those who held that the Indian was incapable of conversion, thus inhuman, and therefore a fit subject of political and economic exploitation; and those who held that the Indian was human, capable of conversion and that this exploitation had to be tempered by the demands of the Catholic faith and of orderly civil processes of government. The myth of the Guadalupe thus validates the Indian's right to legal defense, orderly government, to citizenship; to supernatural salvation, but also to salvation from random oppression.

But if the Guadalupe guaranteed a rightful place to the Indians in the new social system of New Spain, the myth also held appeal to the large group of disinherited who arose in New Spain as illegitimate offspring of Spanish fathers and Indian mothers, or through impoverishment, acculturation or loss of status within the Indian or Spanish group. For such people, there was for a long time no proper place in the social order. Their very right to exist was questioned in their inability to command the full rights of citizenship and legal protection. Where Spaniard and Indian stood squarely within the law, they inhabited the interstices and margins of constituted society. These groups acquired influence and wealth in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but were yet barred from social recognition and power by the prevailing economic, social and political order. To them, the Guadalupe myth came to represent not merely the guarantee of their assured place in heaven, but the guarantee of their place in society here and now. On the political plane, the wish for a return to a paradise of early satisfactions of food and warmth, a life without defeat, sickness or death, gave rise to a political wish for a Mexican paradise, in which the illegitimate sons would possess the country, and the irresponsible Spanish overlords, who never acknowledged the social responsibilities of their paternity, would be driven from the land.

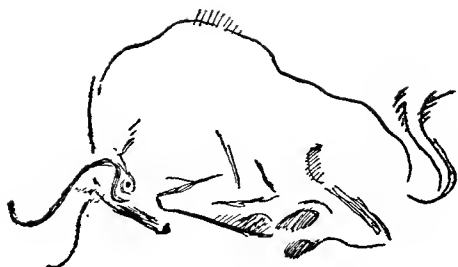
In the writings of seventeenth century ecclesiastics, the Guadalupe becomes the harbinger of this new order. In the book by Miguel Sánchez, published in 1648, the Spanish Conquest of New Spain is justified solely on the grounds that it allowed the Virgin to become manifest in her chosen country, and to found in Mexico a new paradise. Just as Israel had been chosen to produce Christ, so Mexico had been chosen to produce Guadalupe. Sánchez equates her with the apocalyptic woman of the Revelation of John (12:1), "arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" who is to

realize the prophecy of Deuteronomy (8: 7-10) and lead the Mexicans into the Promised Land. Colonial Mexico thus becomes the desert of Sinai; Independent Mexico the land of milk and honey. F. Francisco de Florencia, writing in 1688, coined the slogan which made Mexico not merely another chosen nation, but the Chosen Nation: *non fecit taliter omni nationi*, words which still adorn the portals of the basilica, and shine forth in electric light bulbs at night. And on the eve of Mexican independence, Servando Teresa de Mier elaborates still further the Guadalupe myth by claiming that Mexico had been converted to Christianity long before the Spanish Conquest. The apostle Saint Thomas had brought the image of Guadalupe-Tonantzin to the New World as a symbol of his mission, just as Saint James had converted Spain with the image of the Virgin of the Pillar. The Spanish Conquest was therefore historically unnecessary, and should be erased from the annals of history. In this perspective, the Mexican War of Independence marks the final realization of the apocalyptic promise. The banner of the Guadalupe leads the insurgents; and their cause is referred to as "her law." In this ultimate extension of the symbol, the promise of life held out by the supernatural mother has become the promise of an independent Mexico, liberated from the irrational authority of the Spanish father-oppressors and restored to the Chosen Nation whose election had been manifest in the apparition of the Virgin on Tepeyac. The land of the supernatural mother is finally possessed by her rightful heirs. The symbolic circuit is closed. Mother; food, hope, health, life; supernatural salvation and salvation from oppression; Chosen People and national independence—all find expression in a single master symbol.

The Guadalupe symbol thus links together family, politics and religion; colonial past and independent present; Indian and Mexican. It reflects the salient social relationships of Mexican life, and embodies the emotions which they generate. It provides a cultural idiom through which the tenor and emotions of these relationships can be expressed. It is, ultimately, a way of talking about Mexico: A "collective representation" of Mexican society.

THOUGH some cultures are almost totally lacking in ornamentation and others possess mere rudiments of rhythm, every culture manifests a sufficient degree of each to warrant the generalization that, loosely defined, art and music are universal attributes of culture. Anthropologists have often made studies of art and music as an aspect of their fieldwork. Sometimes this material is used to make a general point, as in Franz Boas' study of the ornamentation of Eskimo needle cases which showed that art style could move from abstraction to realism or vice versa. At other times the material is collected by a specialist primarily for its own sake.

The space devoted to the arts in the present edition of these *Readings* is greatly expanded. In part this represents the growth of professional interest and skill among anthropologists. It is also a means of balancing the acknowledged tendency of the editor to emphasize concrete problems and generally materialistic attempts at their solution. Art, of course, has its material side and can be investigated much as any other rubric of culture. Indeed, it will soon be noted that anthropologists are likely to approach art as they approach religion—with primary concern for social structure. Perhaps this is, at least partially, in expiation of the tendency of earlier anthropologists to concentrate on the meaning of the substance of art, often in the most speculative, unprovable ways.



## 42 Prehistoric Art and Ideology

Morton H. Levine

OBVIOUSLY, THIS SELECTION MIGHT HAVE BEEN INCLUDED IN THE PREVIOUS section and this reflects on the artificiality of the categories used to compartmentalize these Readings. The Levine article is particularly appropriate here because it bridges ideology and art in its attempt to use the remains of the latter to reconstruct the former.

We understand, of course, that Levine's discussion applies on the one hand to a specific culture or congeries of cultures which flourished in Europe tens of thousands of years ago, and on the other to the more recent productions of certain far-flung cultures known to modern ethnography. Between the ancient and the recent cultures no direct historical ties are known and in most cases none can be presumed. We also understand that no one can claim to know what the creators of paleolithic art had in mind as they painted, etched and carved. That is precisely Morton Levine's point: one task of the anthropologist is to try to interpret the remains of ancient cultures otherwise beyond recall (see I:30), and there is no better tool for this than the comparative method.

SOURCE: *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 59 (1957), pp. 949-962. Reprinted by permission of the author and publisher.

Morton H. Levine (b. 1922) is Professor of Anthropology at Vassar College. He has done fieldwork among the Basques, and is completing a book about Basque society and culture.

## Introduction

*The material remains of past civilizations are like shells beached by the retreating sea. The functioning organisms and the milieu in which they lived have vanished, leaving the dead and empty forms behind . . . understanding . . . of ancient societies must be based upon these static molds which bear only the imprint of life.*

GORDON R. WILLEY 1953

The material remains of past civilizations sometimes include art. Where this is so, as in the spectacular case of Upper Paleolithic art in Western Europe, we may be able to add an ideological dimension to our understanding of the ancient people.

Traditional anthropological interest in art treated the subject as an isolated ethnographic category, focused almost exclusively on the technique of art-making, on the iconography, and on the uses to which art is put. But attention has turned increasingly to questions about the ties between art and other aspects of culture. For example, monographs by Mills and McAllester, produced under the aegis of the Harvard Values Study project, have looked for relationships between esthetic values in Navaho art and music and Navaho value culture as a whole. Malraux's *Voices of Silence* exhibits a convergent trend in art history. These and similar studies are laying the foundation on which efforts to interpret prehistoric art must rest.

Translating into achievement the prospect of reconstituting prehistoric "idea culture" through the study of prehistoric art depends upon finding ways and means for archeologists to ask, however indirectly, the same questions which ethnologists increasingly pursue among recent and living art-makers. If relationships between art and other parts of culture can be discerned and described in individual cultures and compared across cultures so as to yield generalizations, if we can make a reasonable case for the idea that a people's art is patterned by the point of view of their culture, if we can suggest the ways in which art exhibits this patterning, we might hope to put the lessons learned to work in behalf of a plausible reconstruction of the attitudes and outlook of a prehistoric people. We might gain a means of narrowing the gap between that span of time for which we know something of man as an economic animal and that much shorter period for which we are acquainted with him as a thinking, believing, feeling creature.

The concern of this paper is two-fold: What kind of controls on interpretation can we derive from the study of ethnographic materials? And, what problems can we approach fruitfully through the analysis of art style? The crucial general issues about the "nature of artistic behavior"

and the character of the "relationship between Art and Culture" are not confronted directly.

The present discussion moves beyond ground already taken by anthropological field forces. This has its obvious advantages and disadvantages. The attempt was stimulated by studies in the art of the Upper Paleolithic and in aboriginal Australian art. In pursuing the concerns of this paper, we will have recourse to the former to exemplify problems in reconstruction of ideology, and to the latter for examples of what ethnographic materials can provide by way of suggestions for and limitations on interpretation. Further, we will deal solely with painting and sculpture, the only arts common to the ethnographic and archeological record.

### *The Archeological Record and Ethnographic Comparison*

Drawing on material survivals and on the data of paleo-studies in geology, geography, and zoology, archeology develops a picture of the life of Upper Paleolithic man in broad terms of habitat-economy-society:

He was a cold climate big game hunter. His environment was at once bountiful and threatening. Animal and plant resources abounded; but bringing down game, even with the refined and varied arsenal then at hand, was extremely difficult if not dangerous. The natural setting which enveloped the Ice Age hunter was uncommonly labile and must have seemed brutally capricious: the weather in Würm times was fairly drastic, and the landscape was tortured by tectonic upheavals. But life appears to have been relatively sedentary. Small local societies may have migrated with the change of season; but evidence for a plentiful food supply and the elaborate art in the caves refute any suggestion of incessant wandering. The existence of art of such a high level of achievement points to specialization of some sort within the groups; but we can only wonder whether the artistic function was or was not combined with religious or chiefly roles. Stylized, intentional burials, appear in the record to suggest not only some sort of funeral exercise, but an explicit recognition of life and death as opposed and remarkable states.

These people or peoples left for posterity one of the great art collections of all time. It was a refined and varied art, produced over many millennia. Taken as a whole, the artistic universe of the Upper Paleolithic offers large animal "portraits," animal figures bearing geometric designs, other beasts studded with darts, sculptured women in the round and in relief—the famous "Venuses"—anthropomorphs of which the best known is the "Sorcerer" at Les Trois Frères, profusely superposed engravings on the walls of caves and on pebbles, handprints on the cave walls, some of which betray mutilation of the fingers, geometric figures

and dots and club-shaped forms, and the vivacious meanders dug into the then soft clay with the fingers or with hafted animal teeth—the so-called “macaroni.”

Archeology gives us a sense of the character of existence and the realistic problems which confronted these ancient hunters. We are presented, too, with a rich corpus of art. The “missing link” is what these early men thought and believed—how they perceived reality, what they valued and what they took as problematic. This is precisely what we hope to recover to some extent from a sensitive, systematic study of the art. But we cannot do this by unaided recourse to the art itself. Granting the assumption that values and world view reach expression in art, this general confidence is of no help in the enterprise of specific interpretation. If we want to eschew impressionistic insights and reconstitute the “missing link” in a way which is communicable and subject to restudy and confirmation or revision by others, then we will have to base our work quite explicitly on the clues and limits afforded by researches among living peoples. To illustrate the potential advantages of exploiting ethnographic materials, let us begin with a brief summary of elements in the life situation, thought and belief, and art of the aboriginal Australians. But not without first entering a caveat:

The material here is a compilation, a summary of and selection from diverse researches pursued among various regions and cultures of Australia. The data on art tend to emphasize that which is characteristic of the Oenpelli district of Arnhem Land in particular and north central and northwest Australia in general. The items on ecology and general culture are more widely eclectic. An effort has been made to avoid gross mismatch in coupling material about various aspects of aboriginal life and art; but error or simplistic generalization is built into this kind of summary. This “lumping” is justified, if at all, from the standpoint of our illustrative purpose and does not pretend to be a satisfactory review of the Australian situation as such. Such a summing up must await many more studies like the recent Mountford volume, *Art, Myth and Symbolism*, in which we are provided with a specific account of aboriginal art and belief in Arnhem Land which discriminates three artistic sub-cultures (Groote Eylandt, Oenpelli, and Yirrkalla) and details the corresponding ideology. Pending the availability of such material from many regions of Australia, the generalizations which are offered below must be regarded as at least highly tentative.

The ungenerous character of the Australian ecology, the utter dependence of the aborigine upon the environment, and the intensity and intimacy of his relationship with it form a classical syndrome in the literature. It is vividly and systematically described by Birdsell; and Tindale and other writers going back to Spencer and Gillen have given witness to the picture of a people who live in groups of less than 50,



wander constantly within their tribal territory, and sustain themselves on a diet which reads virtually like a biological inventory of their locality.

The life situation of the Australian aborigine is not merely reflected in but rather imprinted on his belief and behavior. Basic is the perception of a profound connection between human life and that of plants and animals—and between all life and the rain. Mythology extends this to the notion of a common origin of men and other natural species. Anxiety, induced by dependence upon the environment and its parsimony, is expressed in various ways: there is a whole complex of belief and action associated with fertility and increase, a theme which pervades mythology and forms one of the main bases for ritual and underlies the exuberant ramification of sexual symbolism. The unpredictability of the environment echoes in the belief in benign and malevolent spirits, as well as sorcery, as causal agents. And there are rituals of atonement and propitiation which function to redress the feeling of being vulnerable to retribution for the killing of animals. Marrett describes such ritual as a “composition in the matter of blood revenge.”

Some of the themes in art and artistic behavior among the Australians are:

1. Art-making as one of the principal forms of ritual and ceremonial action. The Australians hold many designs sacred and, further, believe that a design *is* what it represents. For example, the painted actor in ceremonial *becomes* the mythological personage whose role he enacts by virtue of the ritualistic application (“singing on”) of the design.

2. Several other forms of ritual art-making include the palimpsest, or repetitive superposition of engraved and painted forms at certain places; the periodic ritual retouching of the *Wondjina* in the Kimberley caves to “reactivate” their power; ground painting as part of the ceremonial and the remaking or at least repainting of ceremonial objects for each use.

3. The affiliation between men and other living things is a frequent theme in Australian art, especially exemplified in anthropomorphic figures.

4. “X-ray” art is a popular motif, often showing pregnancy or the inner “works” of men and animals, all of this explicitly reflecting an intense concern with life and, more to the point, with fertility and increase. The emphasis on sexual motifs and the outsize portrayal of genitalia in both X-ray and non-X-ray art is another manifestation of this emphasis.

5. The Australian landscape is familiar to the inhabitants on the most intimate level; and features of the landscape are often invested with sacred meaning. The Australians leave their handprints at sacred places as a ritual of personal identification. Elsewhere in this paper we shall

have occasion to discuss footprints in the caves and the animal track motif in art as a reflection of elements of the life situation in style.

How much of Australian belief (and its manifestation in art) refers to the particulars of the Australian situation and what may be referred to aspects in which the Australian and Upper Paleolithic situations are comparable? This important stage of analysis requires recourse to material from other living peoples. As an example, let us consider the question of whether the importance of the food quest to the Australian modes of belief is related to the sheer fact of scarcity.

The Chukchee, Gilyak, Lapps, Eskimo, and other hunting peoples of the world live in ecological circumstances which are by no means as adverse as those faced by the Australians; some of the environments may even be described as relatively bountiful. Yet, in one way or another, these people exhibit anxiety in the face of nature, perceive the world in animistic terms, and take various steps to propitiate the spirits and to compensate nature for what has been taken in the hunt.

Sverdrup offers this revealing account of the Chukchee world view:

The Chukchi concept of nature is fundamentally based on the fear of unexpected and unavoidable events. To them the regularly repeated natural phenomena . . . represent no problem. . . . The hostile nature manifests itself in the unexpected event, in the catastrophes, the storms, the heavy snowfalls . . . disease.

. . . the Chukchi . . . have formed a system of their own which explains nature to their satisfaction, and which they think protects them against the catastrophes. They have populated nature with spirits and consider every unforeseen happening as evidence of the direct action of evil spirits, but . . . they can approach them and negotiate with them—they can hope that their sacrifices will be accepted by the spirits and that the spirits will show mercy or become reconciled if they have been offended.

The belief in good and evil spirits is also found among the Gilyak, according to Seeland, who notes further that evil spirits predominate and must be propitiated. Havens reports that the Gilyak have a two-cycle year, marked by the seal and sable hunting seasons respectively. The hunters dedicate their first land-hunting catch to the "lord of the forest" at a special place; and the seal bones are tossed back into the sea. Similar restitution is found among the Lapps, who set aside certain parts of the slain elk for later burial; among the Minnetaree Indians, who believe the skeleton of the bison will again take on flesh if the bones are undestroyed; among the Baffinland and Hudson's Bay Eskimo, where a boy's first seal is stripped of its skin and flesh and the bones are thrown by his mother into a deep hole so that they may rise again as live seals for the boy to catch in later life.

The fertility-increase complex encountered among the Australians is

conspicuous by its absence among these people; and this must be regarded as specific to the Australian situation. But it is noteworthy that an animistic view of nature, anxiety about continuity of the food supply, and propitiation and restitution ritual are manifest nevertheless. This persistent syndrome of thought and ritual action, apparently independent of the relative bounty of the environment, seems then to be a function of the dependence upon and intimate relationship with the natural setting. In this case, such characteristics would appear potentially attributable to prehistoric hunters like those of the Upper Paleolithic.

The Gilyak data relating belief and art offer a few details suggesting the extension of certain features in Australia beyond the local situation. We might consider them briefly. The Gilyak make art ritually and impute mana-like power to the art product. Seeland refers to "idols" which are both symbols for and dwelling places of the spirits. Small carved figures are worn as magical charms, recalling the Australian *tjurunga*. Hawes reports crude murals in the village houses: some representations of bears, and a rough design like a chessboard. (Without implying that this has any resemblance of which one could make interpretive use, the reference to a mural chessboard pattern recalls two interesting similarities: a like design occurs at Lascaux; and Birdsell has shown the writer a map drawn for him by an Australian informant which looks like a multicolored chessboard.) Kreinovich reports this interesting art ritual among the Gilyak: on the sea-going hunt, an indispensable part of the preparation is the making of a carved figure to be placed on the prow or stern of the boat. The ritual is called *tn,aj*, which also means "image" or "picture" or "figure." It affords protection on the hunt.

Now, with respect to connections between art and belief, some extension of the Australian material beyond the specifically local situation may be suggested: The ritual production of art. The equation of a work of art with that which, from our point of view, it merely represents. The investment of pictures or carvings with mana-like power.

Before proceeding to examine similarities and differences in Australian and Upper Paleolithic art, it might be used to take stock of the procedure thus far. We began with a brief summary of the picture which archeology provides of the life situation of Upper Paleolithic man, and followed this with a very broad inventory of the art. Alongside this account was offered an overview of the conditions of life in Australia, their imprint on belief and behavior, and the expression in art of aspects of Australian world view and values. It then became evident that any extension of the Australian data to Upper Paleolithic man would require further ethnographic comparison to filter out elements specific to the Australians. Examples were offered relevant to two overlapping sets of relationships: (1) the life situation and belief, and (2) belief and the practice of art. Certain very broad positive and negative suggestions

were developed in these illustrative comparisons. To narrow the interpretive possibilities further requires that we turn to the art itself, to its content and, above all, to its style. The analysis of style offers two potential contributions. Before exemplifying the more detailed kind of interpretation which can be made when the sort of study outlined above is followed by scrutiny of the art itself, the concept of style and its potential value to our undertaking deserves consideration.

### *Potential Contributions to the Interpretation of Prehistoric Art in Stylistic Analysis*

*A. Style and Meaning* "By style is meant the constant form—and sometimes the constant elements, quality and expression—in the art of an individual or a group." In this compact statement by Schapiro are two implications of potential importance for the study of prehistoric art. One is that style, as well as subject matter, yields "meanings." The other is that an art style refers to a specific group. Our discussion of style will be devoted to developing these two implications.

Style is not, as is sometimes assumed, an aspect of art independent of subject matter or "content." This distinction merely refers to different lines of sight on the same phenomena. When we talk about subject matter, the objective is principally to identify the items of experience to which the painter has turned for his models, or to characterize the anecdotal situation which has served him for a metaphor. When we talk about style, we may be said to be concerned with identifying the principle or principles of selection which distinguish the artistic utterance.

Selection occurs on three levels. First, it affects the choice of subject matter. The universe of Upper Paleolithic art is predominantly a carnival of the animals—and the big game animals at that. The art of Australia offers a much more representative sample of the plant and animal life of the region, and humans are frequent subjects. This is a gross contrast, but it will serve to illustrate the point: If we were to approach the matter from a primary interest in "content," our problem would be solved with an inventory of the creatures who inhabit the artistic universe. The stylistic approach, however, aims at detecting the bias which such a census might reveal and then trying to interpret its significance.

Even when the subject matter is merely identified, there is usually some attempt to describe the manner of depiction, the second level on which selection occurs. The suggestion here is that the manner of depiction is properly and usefully regarded as an object of analysis in its own right. The same subject matter is sometimes found in two quite distinct bodies of art—for example, the fish paintings in Arnhem Land and at the Gorge d'Enfer in France. Discriminating the piscine species

is hardly sufficient to account for the contrast in point of view expressed by the art. More to the point is the X-ray treatment of the fish in Australia as against the full-fleshed presentation of the Upper Paleolithic fish. The difference in this case is stylistic, a difference in the selection of relevant elements from the model encountered in real life. This is what distinguishes an Altamira bison from the buffalo on a nickel. On this level, selection is defined by such questions as: What aspects of the model are retained? What aspects are stressed, by disproportion or color or other means? What aspects are attenuated or ignored?

Many Australian paintings present a tableau, built either on some situation encountered in daily life or on a fantastic recombination of various individual elements of ordinary experience. In such a work, the artist creates and populates a milieu. This expresses the third level of selection, that which involves patterns of arrangement of the subject matter in the total composition. In the *Mimi* paintings in Arnhem Land, we may see inordinately tall human figures hurling spears at kangaroo. Some of the bark paintings from the same region offer a synthetic situation: A man dominates the center of the picture. He is ringed by fish, two of which are converging on his huge, extended penis. In the former work, the milieu is modeled on a mundane event, whereas the latter presents a microcosmos whose overall arrangement or gestalt is synthetic, a product of fantasy. In both, however, the elements of subject matter have been selected; the depiction of the subjects shows selection; and, in the frame of reference of the total composition, the "environment" is established through selective principles expressed in juxtaposition, relative size of the elements, the character of the *lebensraum*, and suggestions about time through treatment of sequence, and so forth.

In contrast with Australian art, one of the most striking features of Upper Paleolithic art is the rarity of "scenes." Where they do occur, as in the famous one at Lascaux, the style is markedly different from the rest of the art. They are generally very economical delineations, almost stick figures in some cases, rather than opulent paintings; and their "sketchy" quality suggests a kind of reportage, perhaps the illustration of a verbal narrative. Most of the art, however, is "portraiture" of one kind or another, i.e., the presentation of an animal which is not placed in a context but rather preempts the "milieu" of the painting. Not only does the analysis of compositional selection become much more refined, but we are faced with interpreting the significance of the absence of any kind of *mise en scène*.

Thus far, we have described style as the expression of principles of selection on three levels and have sought to specify them. In order to suggest the "meanings" which style may yield, we must turn to a more general canvass of the idea of selection per se.

Boas derives selection from the limitations of the artistic media. The materials of the painter and sculptor do not permit truly literal imitation, but constrain them to select. This is self-evident, but it doesn't explain why the selection should not turn out to be random. The fact is that the selection is not random, or else we could never talk about "Gothic" art or "Cubism" and so on; so that we must work toward some idea of the source of the patterns of selection.

Tylor said that the purpose of art "is not imitation, but what the artist strives to bring out is the idea that strikes the beholder." In relating selection to creative intent, rather than to the constraints imposed by the media, Tylor puts us on the path to a useful conception of meaning in style. Malraux develops this theme. The artistic enterprise is conceived by him in the following terms: 1) Selection from an uncharted profusion of forms and meanings available in the outside world; and, 2) the composition, by virtue of style, of a coherent universe in which reality is shaped according to human values.

This will recall the parallel statement by Whorf in quite a different context, worth quoting here because it refers in a more general way to the source of selection as a function of symbolic behavior in man's organization of reality:

The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary, the world is presented to us in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds. . . . We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to do it in this way.

A few years earlier, in *Patterns of Culture*, Benedict defined the ethos of a culture as a selection from the great arc of human possibilities. Her analogic reference to the configuration of culture and art style in the same work is not merely heuristic; the conception of art style was as much a model as a metaphor.

An art style is a particular set of selective principles. Taken as a whole, the style of a particular work of art expresses the perceptive bias of the individual artist, as conditioned by (1) his peculiar life history and (2) the context in which his life unfolds, that context being the human group to which he belongs and its culture. But there is also a style attributable to a corpus of art by many artists, as the synoptic collections of any historically organized museum will confirm. Sapir's distinction between individual and social behavior can be projected to reconcile the individual and social dimensions in art style: those aspects of "individual style" which may be referred to shared patterns of selection represent the art style of the group or culture. The "cultural

meaning" of an art style, then, is the organization of reality, the conceptual modes, the various levels of value—in short, the collective representations—of the culture which produced it.

*B. Stylistic Units and Cultural Units* Up to now, we have been concerned with interpreting art—with the use of ethnographic materials and with the meanings which may be derived from the analysis of style. Along with Schapiro, we have assumed that a particular art style is the product of a particular historical sociocultural entity. The concept of style outlined above would seem to warrant this assumption. And, although taxonomic arrangements of non-artistic archeological materials in "industries" and "assemblages" have not been equatable with cultures, archeology has used art styles to achieve culture historical integration. On the premise that art styles refer to historic cultural entities, archeologists have plotted their distribution geographically and chronologically and have been able to order their assemblages in a space-time matrix. Bennett's reconstruction of a Central Andean area co-tradition summed up historical and methodological contributions by Kroeber and Willey, among others, and remains today a prime example of the effective use of art styles in plotting culture history.

But to say that an art style belongs to an historic sociocultural entity doesn't quite do away with the problem of coincidence between an artistic unit and a group unit. We must consider Schapiro's point that a culture may foster two art styles contemporaneously. If this were true, we could not be sure whether our ideological reconstruction referred to part of the outlook of a group, or to the whole of it; and our unit of reference would slip from our grasp.

From the standpoint of the present concern with cultures on the hunting and gathering level, i.e., cultures which are likely to be homogeneous, the problem does not appear formidable. An apparent instance of diverse art styles maintained by a single culture in Arnhem Land disappears upon closer inspection. The Mimi paintings in the caves are, in most stylistic respects, markedly different from the bark paintings and other art produced today and in the recorded past. We cannot assume, because the Mimi paintings figure in contemporary belief and ritual, that they represent another art style of the aborigines of today, who do not make them, do not know or have forgotten who did make them, and regard this art as both representative of and produced by spirits. The fact that present-day aborigines project an explanation on the art does not put them in possession of two art styles.

Turning more directly to Schapiro's point that, "The variation of styles in a culture or group is often considerable within the same period" we are led to inquire into the unit characterized as "a culture or group." Considering the range of examples adduced throughout the article, it is fair to assume that he refers to contemporaneous variety within some-

thing like "Western culture." The tremendous diversity within this frame of reference is a plain fact, but are we justified in referring to it as "a culture"? To the extent that we are justified in taking Western culture as a unit, it is vis-à-vis non-Western cultures; and then it is the similarities within our unit, not the differences, that are being stressed. If, however, we are going to focus on variation within this huge geographical, historical, sociocultural framework, then we have to recognize subcultures in space, time, and the organization of society and social thought. And the question becomes one of coincidence between a single art style and a single subculture.

The recent history of modern art gives vivid testimony to the overlapping and side-by-side existence of diverse artistic styles; it is fruitless to seek a common denominator for Expressionism and Cubism or for Norman Rockwell and Picasso. There is parallel diversity in views of reality and values. The artistic subcultures can be characterized by different orientations in belief and behavior. However, in no case can a variety of styles be attributed to one artistic "school." The problem which Schapiro raises is not, in the end, a problem of reconciling cultural homogeneity with stylistic diversity, but one of establishing meaningful coincidences between art styles and sociocultural entities.

This problem is yet to be solved with respect to the Upper Paleolithic. Breuil has organized the art into two great cycles, the Aurignacian-Périgordian and the Solutréo-Magdalenian, on the basis of archeological evidence, stylistic criteria (which assume a progression toward accomplished naturalistic rendering and increasing elaborateness in technique), and similarities in certain broad features of execution. This grouping of the material, granting its validity, is nevertheless unsuited to the purposes outlined in this paper. The units are chronological and lump obviously disparate art styles. The Altamira polychrome bison are placed in Magdalenian VI. So are the bison at Font-de-Gaume. Yet they are remarkably different in style. The former are thickly outlined, presented in a variety of poses, very detailed, adorned with a stylized, fringe-like treatment of the hair. The latter have more generalized forms, are rather delicately outlined, are mostly standing erect, with emphatic development of the hump and other rounded parts of the body. The refinement of delineation in the French bison contrasts with the Spanish cave paintings as Japanese art might contrast with Rouault or Picasso.

In order to obtain units against which the analysis of style can be projected, it will be necessary to cross-cut Breuil's chronological classification with groupings based on spatial distribution. Despite their apparent contemporaneity, and whatever similarities in outlook they may have shared, there were differences in the principles of selection between the people at Altamira and those at Font-de-Gaume. We have to assume, provisionally at least, that these were variant local cultures. What might,



for convenience, be called the "Font-de-Gaume Style" and the "Altamira Style" must be plotted geographically. Once the distribution is known, the archeology of the area which corresponds with the art style must also be treated as a unit distinct from the remainder of the larger region. In short, a stylistic-cultural region must be plotted and dealt with as an entity.

The outcome of such "style-mapping" will be individual units with which we can begin to do interpretive work. It will not result in a sequence or Upper Paleolithic art history, for the present state of our knowledge of art styles and the logic of their progression is totally inadequate to allow us to convert several different art styles into an historical series on internal evidence. For sequences of styles, we will have to continue to depend for a long time on the data of dirt archeology.

### *Some Trial Interpretations of Upper Paleolithic Art*

Let us proceed now to some attempts at interpretation of some features of Upper Paleolithic art, using the guides developed above. The following suggestions were developed in ethnographic comparisons, taking off from a review of the Australian data:

Dependence upon nature is one of the crucial features of a hunting and gathering subsistence, regardless of the relative bounty of the environment.

The relationship with the natural setting is intimate and intense.

Hunting is difficult with the inadequate arsenal possessed by these peoples; and cornering and killing big game animals is not only problematic but often dangerous.

The unexpected and irregular manifestations of nature produce major crises in the lives of such dependent people.

These situational factors are reflected in several themes in the outlook and behavior:

Nature is perceived as active and purposive and personal, sometimes in animistic terms and sometimes in outright anthropomorphic terms; and there is some tendency to identify to greater or lesser degree with non-human living things.

Even when the food supply is abundant, dependence, unpredictability in the total situation, and the resistance of big game to the hunter's purpose invoke anxiety which is expressed by peopling the universe with spirits or gods which (a) account for the character of the situation, and (b) provide the possibility of appropriate action to control or at least salvage the situation.

Nature, thus regarded, is approached from two directions: It is per-

ceived as accessible to propitiation; and compensation for what man must take from it in order to survive is regarded as possible and necessary.

In turn, these themes are reflected in certain attitudes and patterns of behavior with respect to art:

The main belief in this connection is that a work of art is the same thing as that which it represents.

From this stems the idea that art objects have mana-like power.

In the realm of behavior, we have seen that hunting and gathering people who engage in art-making do so ritually.

This represents the range of possibilities filtered from a description of Australian life, belief, and art by virtue of comparisons with other hunting and gathering peoples designed to distinguish between what is specific to the Australian situation and what might remain for use in interpreting Upper Paleolithic art. In approaching the prehistoric material, the art itself guides us to a still closer range of potential explanation. The selection reflected in the subject matter, depictive treatment, and compositional arrangement of the art is the clue to the selection which characterizes the outlook of the ancient people. In view of what has been said about the need for well articulated art styles for the Upper Paleolithic, it is only possible to deal here with discrete features which cannot be added up and offered as the values and outlook upon reality of a true sociocultural entity.

*The handprints in the caves are the remains of a ritual of identification ("Kilroy was here"), the mark of the pilgrim's visit to a sacred place.* The very way of life, as we have seen, develops an intimate sense of locality and the imputation of sacred character to features of the landscape. This is elaborately expressed in Australia, where there are also handprints and where the natives are able to identify the owners who have placed them there in a ritual act.

*The profusely superposed drawings are the traces of a restitution ritual: whenever an animal was killed, his essence was restored to Nature by ritual rendering of his image at a sacred spot.* Basic to this interpretation are the following beliefs: an image is what it represents; restitution can and must be made to the spirits or gods who stand for Nature. These express anxiety over the continuity of the food supply, born of dependence upon nature, and the notion that taking life is dangerous not only vis-à-vis the powerful beast but also the powerful spirits who inspire and protect all life.

The superposed drawings occur at selected places, often surrounded by available areas for drawing. On occasion, as at Les Trois Frères, they are placed in juxtaposition with other art—in this case the "Sorcerer"—in a manner which suggests sacrifice to a spirit or god. Above all, the palimpsests of this kind suggest a compulsive superposition rather than

mere overpainting or overdrawing; and this compulsiveness inspires the notion of ritual. Similar artistic phenomena are reported from Australia by Basedow, who cites rock carvings at Yunta in the Flinders mountains where "one design has been carved over the top of another, time after time, until eventually the ground appeared as though it were covered by an elaborate carpet." Speaking of the "impression of profuseness" in the cave galleries of rock painting in Arnhem Land, Elkin says: "The drawings overlay one another. This suggests that satisfaction lies not so much in admiring the finished picture, as in the act of painting it or in some practical desire it expresses and in some result it will effect . . . he believes that this 'ritual' act will bring about the desired result."

*The anthropomorphic figures, as a general class of art, express the affiliation between men and other living creatures and, as well, the personification of nature.* This is a very vague generalization; but it does suggest the direction of productive analysis. Assuming the significance of anthropomorphic figures suggested here, the most informative path would seem to require a close study of the factors of selection—human and animal elements used—and composition of these elements into a synthetic figure. This is not an easy task for the Upper Paleolithic, where anthropomorphic figures are not a strongly expressed artistic theme and where they tend to occur as one-of-a-kind examples.

*The animals which occur with darts or spears sticking in them have been popularly interpreted as imitative magic;* and although this kind of interpretation is again very general, it does gain support from other evidence discussed above. This involves the same kind of equation of the artistic depiction with that which is depicted as do the superposed drawings of the palimpsests, although the intent here is clearly not restitution but rather to gain power over the animal. Thus, we have an expression tending to confirm the perception of the game animals as dangerous in a literal sense. In the more specific treatment of *perspective tordue* below, there seems ample justification to impute this sense of problem to Upper Paleolithic man.

*Perspective tordue in Upper Paleolithic art is not a manifestation of inept perspective rendering but evidence for the intense concern of the hunter, with his inadequate armament, over the danger he faced from the horned wild beasts.* "Twisted perspective" is Breuil's name for an artistic practice encountered in the Upper Paleolithic in which the horns of animals otherwise shown in profile are turned around full face to the viewer. The accepted interpretation of this phenomenon has been that it represents less accomplished naturalism than later art. To put it another way, this style has been designated as earlier and assigned to the Périgordian, largely on the assumption that there is a progression in Upper Paleolithic art as a whole toward the Renaissance ideal of perspective.

This assumes a kind of progressive learning which took place over

many thousands of years. It also ignores the possibility that perspective *tordue* expresses a principle of style, a kind of compositional selection which is designed to stress the significance to the artist of the horn of the animal. However, recourse to the Australian material yields evidence that such twisting of usual appearances is purposeful and refers to aspects of the life experience of the artists.

In Australia there are many pictures in which the figure of a man or an animal is presented in profile, standing or running, but with the soles of the feet turned up to face the viewer. We know why the Australians do this. From early childhood, boys are taught to identify human and animal tracks with extreme subtlety. Their lives depend on the success of the hunt and game is scarce, and no means of detecting the opportunity for a kill can be neglected. Animal tracks themselves are a prominent motif in Australian art; in the pictures described above they merely become an element—albeit an important one—of a larger composition. It should also be noted that footprints of humans, as well as handprints, are found in the caves and are part of the syndrome of identification. Tracks are the mark of men and animals in Australia.

In this light, it is evident that the presentation of the soles of the feet in the Arnhem Land bark paintings and other art represents a selective principle, a violation of literal truth in behalf of a more profound reality, reflecting the intense concern with identifying animals and men and even spirits.

In the Upper Paleolithic, we cannot overlook the possibility of an analogous situation in the art, which takes its shape from the particular situation that obtained then and there. We have referred to the inefficiency of the weapons of Upper Paleolithic man in dealing with large animals; and he doubtless used traps and pitfalls and other means to bring them down. It is also quite likely that one of the perils of wandering around the countryside to hunt or to collect vegetable food was the possibility of attack by these beasts. This was a real problem for him; and the notion that his art features the selective principle which gives prominence to the horns on these grounds seems more plausible than inept rendering—an idea which applies esthetic values limited to a particular period of Western art history. Further, in the famous “wall-scene” at Lascaux, which appears as noted earlier to be illustrating an actual event, we get a depiction of an event in which the disemboweled beast looms over the fallen hunter, horns pointing to the fallen man and to the viewer.

The above are some examples of interpretations of Upper Paleolithic art, offered to illustrate how artistic selection may be projected on a range of possible explanations to narrow that range considerably. This paper has been designed to suggest procedures whereby ethnographic materials, the data about ecology and the life situation and art afforded

by archeology, a concept of style as selective perception, can contribute to a systematic, verifiable sequence of analysis and reconstruction. The essence of the procedure is a progressive narrowing down of the variety of explanation for which plausibility can be asserted. The objective is a limitation on plausible explanation; patent demonstration is out of the question. Even so, with much work on a more modest scale than indicated here, on many fronts which demand study, there is some prospect of narrowing the span between that period for which we know something of man as a highly evolved animal and that brief epoch for which his attitudes and outlook are known to us in specific detail.

# 43 Principles of Opposition and Vitality in Fang Aesthetics<sup>1</sup>



James W. Fernandez

THE USE OF ARTISTIC MATERIALS TO DELVE INTO PROBABLE VALUES AND THE content of an ideology is not necessarily confined to ancient archeological cultures (II:42). In this selection Professor Fernandez shows us how the investigation of art may throw light on a complex problem of ethos. We see once again the interconnectedness of cultural subsystems as Fernandez is compelled to draw on his knowledge of Fang social structure in order to illuminate his theories about Fang art and world view. We see that the symbolisms employed are anything but direct and simple. Indeed, we may wonder what kind of criticisms other anthropologists might make of Fernandez' approach (see II:7). Still, we can appreciate efforts such as represented by this article and, what is more, see in them a possibility of indirectly testing other attempts, such as Professor

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Levine's in the previous article. That is, if it is possible to check out some or all of Fernandez' theories about Fang, his successes and failures may help us to gauge probabilities when we deal with cultures beyond direct recall.

# I

As part of his introductory argument to *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, Durkheim raises a seminal point that has rarely since been adequately followed up in the literature or tested in the field. It is a point that he had raised previously, with Mauss, in an article, "On Some Forms of Primitive Classification," which appeared in his *Journal de l'Année Sociologique* in 1904. If we examine some excerpts from Durkheim's argument we will see its relevance to the topic we have before us—Principles of Opposition and Vitality in Fang Aesthetics. He is speaking about the way in which Australian and North American Indian tribes lay out space.

Among the Zuni, for example, the pueblo contains seven quarters. Each of these is a group of clans which has had a unity. Now their space also contains seven quarters and each of these seven quarters of the world is in intimate connection with a quarter of the pueblo that is to say with a group of clans. One division is thought to be in relation with the north, another represents the west, etc. [Moreover] each quarter of the pueblo has its characteristic color which symbolizes it.

Since Durkheim's perspective is a sociological one, this material leads him directly to affirm that "the social organization has been the model for the spatial organization and a reproduction of it," an affirmation which he easily translates later into the book's major point—that social life has been the source of the religious life.

The relevance of these facts of social and spatial organization to aesthetic problems should be clear, for aesthetics, after all, has as one of its primary concerns the manner in which values, whether colors or tones or even words for the poet, are formally arranged in space. Presumably if one is able to tie up spatial organization with social organization he shall have said either one of two things. Either aesthetic preference responds more than we realize to social structure or social structure is itself to some extent the expression of an aesthetic preference.

More directly relevant for the body of our discussion, however, is Durkheim's further discussion in which, talking about the distinction between right and left in the primitive's organization of space, he suggests that in primitive societies the idea of contradiction is dominant. We have not clearly recognized this, he says, because in our own societies the principle of identity dominates scientific thought. But our

present logical bias notwithstanding, our doctrine of the excluded middle and our inability to contemplate unresolved contradictions, the idea of contradiction has been historically of the greatest importance. In primitive thought and in the mythologies that linger on in our own day Durkheim argues:

We are continually coming upon things which have the most contradictory attributes simultaneously, who are at the same time one and many, material and spiritual, who can divide themselves up indefinitely without losing anything of their constitution. In mythology it is an axiom that the part is worth the whole.

In the contradiction between the sacred and the profane Durkheim is of course to give us full explication of not only the importance of contradiction in primitive societies but indeed the necessity of it. Unfortunately, these two categories have never been fully understood and the overtones of the terms have tended to mystify the reader.

Rather than pursuing Durkheim in the direction of the sacred and the profane I shall take up this notion of contradiction as it manifests itself in Fang culture. I shall be interested in the idea in a number of areas of Fang life, but it must be kept in mind that my basic interest in it is as it is central to their aesthetic—their notions, that is, of preferred form in object and action. For what is aesthetically pleasing to the Fang has, as I shall attempt to show, a vitality that arises out of a certain relationship of contradictory elements. The Fang not only live easily with contradictions; they cannot live without them.

It is well known to Africanists that a good many peoples of that continent possess uncentralized political systems in which order and stability, however, are achieved through lineage structure and a principle called segmentary opposition. Of these people one might truly say that they cannot live without contradictions. The Fang, though highly uncentralized, do not have fully functioning lineages and by the period of field work, 1958–1960, had only the relics of segmentary opposition. In this they are like the rest of the Bantu of northwestern equatorial Africa. For these people other kinds of evidence such as that introduced here are relevant.

Fang discourse in the area of aesthetics provides a direct translation for the word *vitality* (*eniñ*, or, more exactly, the capacity to survive). It is more difficult to find a substantive to translate the word *contradiction*. They speak of things which are in the general sense contradictory, adverbially in circumlocution as not being close to one another (*ka bi*—not approximate—not congenial and by extension not possible) or as standing opposite from each other (*mam me ne mfa ayat*). It is immediately apparent that they have a spatial analogy in mind when they speak of what we would call contradictions and, there-



fore, I have taken as the most satisfactory translation for Durkheim's term the word *opposition*, since the spatial analogy is in this word as well. There are difficulties in this translation for quite obviously what is contradictory may include more than what is simply in opposition. Contradiction may imply inconsistency which is not necessarily opposition. I shall ignore this difficulty, however, and limit myself to the principle of opposition as a portion of the idea of contradiction.

## II

These notions of opposition and vitality first stood out for me in my data when I was querying the Fang as regards their famed ancestor figures. I had a collection of some twelve of these figures of various qualities, individual styles, and dates of manufacture (most of them recent unfortunately), and I simply asked each informant to select those he especially preferred and those he especially disliked, explaining why. I accepted the thesis, incidentally, that there is such a thing as art criticism in non-literate society and that art lies not so much in the act of creation but comes into being in the relationship between creation and criticism—the artist and his critics. As events turned out among the Fang, there is indeed a lively spirit of art criticism. It flows around the carver as he is in the process of turning out his statue in the men's council house, and it influences his work. If I can take one of our focal concepts here in vain, it becomes possible to speak of an opposition between the carver and his village critics. Very often the villagers consider themselves the final cause of the statue and apply what social pressures they can to the efficient cause, the carver, to see that the work turns out to their expectations. The carver in his turn must reach some sort of accommodation with his critics and what this is depends upon the personalities involved. In some Fang villages the carver retreats from the council house to the solitude of the banana plantation behind the village and in these villages respect for the carver is sometimes even institutionalized though he cannot expect to escape his critics when the statue is completed. Carvers do not have much status or power in Fang society, though they are esteemed; therefore, they cannot expect to impose aesthetic acquiescence upon their clients. Nevertheless, it is a curious fact that I never found a case in which a statute was refused. The view seems to prevail that any statue can serve its function atop the reliquary whether it is aesthetically satisfying or not.

Given this custom of criticism, what, then, was the response of these eight informants, two of them carvers themselves, to the twelve figures? In explaining that response one must remember that it is the product of the evolution of Fang attitudes toward their ancestral figures as well as the evolution of the figures themselves. The Fang ancestor figure of the

last thirty or forty years is a different object than the aboriginal one, and the thesis that the full figure was a stimulus response to European religious statuary is not to be rejected out of hand—probably by indirect acculturation from the coastal peoples of the southern Gabon, more particularly the Loango Vili and Balumbo who traded far up the coast and inland in the last half of the last century. In any case, as Tessmann has affirmed, the aboriginal ancestral statue was simply a head carved on a stem thrust down into the top of the round bark barrel containing the ancestral skulls. Tessmann does not point out what informants make clear—that the bark barrel (*nsuk*) was taken as the belly or torso belonging to the head. The stomach, thorax, and sometimes viscera, it might be mentioned, are the centers of power and thought while the head is simply the organ of apprehension and direction enabling what fundamentally belongs to the torso to be willfully put to use. The Fang entertain a lively sense of opposition between the head and the torso which might be summed up appropriately in our aphorism “your eyes are bigger than your stomach.” The hope for the Fang is that the head and the stomach should work together in complementary fashion though they do not always succeed in doing so. In any case the original reliquary (*bieri*) was conceived as a head (the carving) and a stomach (the bark barrel). These two elements had a relationship of complementary opposition. They worked together to accomplish the vital purposes of the cult though they were really in some sense opposing entities.

As Tessmann has further shown, the Fang ancestor carving changed from simply a head to a half figure, and finally to a full figure which perched on top of the bark (*nsuk*). What took place, as I intend to show from the remarks of my informants, was a shift from the opposition between bark (*nsuk*) and carving to an opposition or oppositions within the carving itself, a tension which, as in the aboriginal situation, was a source of the carving's vitality. Accompanying this change in form of Fang statuary was a change in function. This change is signaled by Tessmann's remark that in his day the *eyima bieri* statues were very easy to purchase. The Fang were eager to sell them—in strong contrast to the reliquary which was impossible to obtain. By the 1940's and '50s, however, and this was the ethnographer's personal experience, it became difficult indeed to buy or even view these statuettes which were practically all secreted away from the zealous eye of administration and missionary. It is clear that the Fang had come to attach considerable importance to the figure itself. Here again there is, conceivably, another example of stimulus diffusion, for the Fang were bound to have remarked the importance laid upon religious statuary and graphic representations of the deity in Christianity, and were bound to reflect more respectfully upon their own figurations of the supernatural. It is of equal interest that only in recent years have pieces of cranial bone been

actually worked into small concavities in the statuettes themselves. This custom, as well, is probably to be traced to the long-standing custom among the Loango, but what is of greater interest is that it represents to some degree a transfer of the function of the reliquary to the statue itself. In sum, the statue, the latter-day Fang ancestor statue, is a much more awesome and much different object from its predecessors. It is a much more autonomous object. Something of this awe was reflected in the approach of those informants called upon for an aesthetic critique of those statues which had already been in use. Insofar as it is always difficult to render an adequate aesthetic judgment of that which is at the same time sacred, so the informants' response to these figures seemed truncated by comparison to their response to the others. Apparently having rested on top of the craniums, they were somehow thenceforth removed from everyday aesthetic judgment.

In setting my informants before the statues arranged in a row, I tried to limit myself to the question, Which figures do you like the most and why? (*wa dan nyugue beyime beze Amu dze.*) In some cases I had to prompt an explanation for the informants, especially the carvers who hesitated apparently to criticize the work of another and tended to limit themselves to indicating their preference. But at no time was any aesthetic criteria suggested to the informant as a means of eliciting a response. I cannot enter here into a complete analysis of their responses, but I will suggest the pertinent features. Their statements were full of words, of course, suggesting the finished or unfinished quality of the particular object, was it smooth, and had it been completely cut out from the wood from which it was made or were there still traces of its rougher origins? They talked about the balance (*bibwe*) of the object and whether its various quadrants balanced with the rest. If one leg or one arm or one shoulder was proportionately differently carved than its opposite, this was practically always a cause for comment and criticism. There should be balance in the figure, and the proportions of opposite members whether legs or arms or eyes or breasts should display that. Without this balance of opposite members, it was said—and this is the important comment—the figure would not be a real one (*a se fwo nrwan bian*), it would have no life or vitality within it (*eniñ e se ete*). I must confess that those features that seemed to have what we would call movement or vitality were not those selected by my informants. They generally picked those whose presentation and posture were stolid, formal, even—and perhaps this is the best word—suppressed.

This whole idea that vitality is obtained through the balance of opposite members in the statue was a clue of some importance in my understanding of Fang culture. This idea is, of course, crucial to our discussion and it deserves further examination. The Fang generally, and not only these informants, argue, when speaking of their statuettes, that

they are "our traditional photographs." "They are our way of representing living persons as the European represents them in photographs." Now it is rarely argued that these statues represent particular living persons, just living persons in general. They are not portraits. But despite their quite obvious stylization the Fang insist that they are in some sense accurate portrayals of living persons. Now I have come to believe after lengthy discussions on this matter—for example, the Fang recognize well enough that the proportions of these statues are not the proportions of living men—that what the statue represents is not necessarily the truth, physically speaking, of a human body but a vital truth about human beings, that they keep opposites in balance. Both the statues and men have this in common and therefore the statues in this sense are accurate portrayals—accurate representations of living beings. They express, if they are well done, a fundamental principle of vitality. I am obliged to say, however, that this is an inference developed from my informants' remarks.

Though I think it unnecessary here to reconcile Fang statements with what has been disclosed above, it is often said that the *eyima bieri* gathers its power from its association with the craniums in the bark barrel and is nothing without it. This is, of course, primarily true of the *eyima bieri* before pieces of bone were actually placed within it and it became a *mwan biani* (literally, *medicine child*). It also should be noted that once a year during the initiation cycle of the ancestral cult the statues were taken off their reliquaries and danced as puppets above a palm thatch partition. Here, too, the object was to animate them, vitalize them, give them life. Whatever implications may be drawn from these further facts in respect to the vitality of the statuettes, it may, in any case, be concluded that it was important that they possessed this quality and that the aesthetic reaction to the figures was conditioned by that requirement.

Before considering the principles of opposition and vitality in other areas of Fang life, I should mention one further opposition—though not a spatial opposition—which the Fang feel add quality to these statues. If one looks closely at these statues, one finds that the great majority of them have infantile or childlike features. The obvious feature is the protruding stomach and umbilical rupture which figures so largely in many statues. The umbilical rupture is primarily characteristic of infants and children, less characteristic of the strengthened stomach wall of adults. Another infantile feature lies in the stylization of the eyes obtained by nailing round disks of tin into the orbital cavities. This feature was first called to my attention by my clerk, who remarked the wide open glare of an infant as being like that of an *eyima*. Research bore out the relevancy of that association for many Fang. Finally the proportions of the statue—the large torso, the big head, and the flexed, disproportionately small

legs are definitely infantile in character. Now the opposition contained here lies in the fact that the statue presents both an infantile and an ancestral aspect. While the Fang argue that the statues represent age, the ancestors, and their august powers in their descendants' affairs, they also recognize the infantile qualities of the figures themselves.

There are, of course, cosmological and theological explanations for this juxtaposition of contradictory qualities in the statues. Among these is the fact that the newborn are felt to be especially close to the ancestors and are only gradually weaned away by ritual and time to human status. Another explanation for the infantile quality lies in the primary concern of the ancestral cult in fertility and increase. An infantile representation is an apt expression of the desire for children. More important than that, I would argue, however, is the fact that these contradictory qualities in the ancestor figure give it a vitality for the Fang that it would not possess if the *eyima* simply figures an aged person or an infant.

There is one other important and familiar opposition in African traditional sculpture, that between male and female elements as found in androgynous sculpture, particularly from the western Sudan. Unfortunately, because the presence of Fang statues embodying a male-female opposition would greatly enhance my argument as to the achievement of vitality through opposition, there are to my knowledge no clear-cut examples of such sculpture among the Fang. Where such statues are found in Africa the argument we are developing here may apply.

### III

I turn now to a discussion of opposition and vitality in other areas of Fang life with the object of suggesting that these principles at work in their aesthetic reaction to their ancestor figures are found more broadly in their culture. First impressions support me here. The Fang village, when approached from the equatorial rain forest, with its two long rows of huts facing each other across a narrow barren court, provokes in the observer the immediate impression of opposition. And it would seem that the existence of oppositions in their society is recognized in the way the Fang lay out their villages. In fact, the minor segment of the clan (the *mvogabot*) is often defined as those brothers who build opposite each other because, it is said, it is better to shout insults across the court of the village to your distant brother than whisper them in his ears as your neighbor. This spatial opposition prevails even within the family (*ndebot*, house of people), and the Fang say *nda mbo, binoñ bibañ* (one house, two beds) to imply that opposition and resultant division lie even in this smallest social unit, the domestic household of the extended family. Equally it may be noted that the arrangement and mechanics of dispute

in the men's council house follow this plan of opposition. In the *aba* there are two rows of benches upon which the disputants sit facing each other and between which the witnesses or judges rise, one at a time, to make their statements.

The opposition which exists within the minor segment (*mvogabot*) is that of lineage relatives whose relationship is distant enough, usually more than four generations deep, as to no longer impose strong allegiance. Their tenuous relationship is signified by spatial opposition in building arrangement. *Ndebot*, houses of people, extended families within the *mvogabot*, build side by side in the lengthening double row of houses with which we are familiar, so long as they feel strong allegiance. But they build opposite when they no longer feel the close bonds. A feeling of separation and instability within the lineage is expressed by spatial opposition. It is necessary to point out, however, that the spatial opposition of village structure is not conceived as an undesirable end in itself but is regarded as necessary. One row of houses without its opposite does not constitute a village; such a village cannot be good, pleasing, or functional. Two opposite rows of houses, it is said, stand off the forest and in the old days of internecine strife provided a closed, fortified rectangle against surprise attack. Moreover, the social antagonisms of lineage members living on opposite sides of the court are one important source, it is admitted, of the animation (*elulua*) and vitality (*eniñ*—the word is actually used) that is one of the desired features of village life. Here, then, as well, opposition is associated with vitality. What is aesthetically appropriate is socially necessary. The oppositions we have noted are part of a larger scheme guaranteeing social viability.

Now the achievement of viability in the social structure through complementary opposition of equivalent segments has been, as mentioned above, fully demonstrated by anthropologists in respect to segmentary kinship systems. Though the Fang recognize segments within their lineages and though these seem to be vestiges of corporate kinship groups, those segments do not now have full corporate character. Hence they do not provide complete data in respect to the notion of complementary opposition. It is possible, however, to examine the same principle in full blown operation among the Fang in the kinship mechanism known as complementary filiation—the tendency to trace relationship of ascending generations alternately to male and female progenitors and progenitrix. Thus the *ndebot* is traced to a woman founder, the *mvogabot* to a male, the next segment beyond that to a female, and eventually to the clan which is traced to a male. Now the point here is that male and female qualities are to the Fang opposing ones. The principal connotation of male origin is divisiveness and conflict; the principal connotation of female origin is unity and common purpose. Moreover, these connotations accord with the nature of the various segmentary groups as they are

traced to either male or female. The *ndebot* seen as founded by a female is cohesive and fairly stable. The *mvogabot* traced to a male founder is divisive and volatile and so on up to the clan level whose male origin accords with its characteristic potential for dispersion and division.

The Fang argue when questioned about this custom that no clan, lineage, or segment can be created by men alone; hence they must trace their kin groups to both male and female. They argue in effect, if I may be permitted to summarize the drift of a good bit of field material on this point, that the viability of the kin group lies in the fact that it is anchored in opposing qualities male and female which, however, due to their distribution at different levels of the lineage, achieve complementary opposition. The lineage structure systematically distributes maleness and femaleness so that these two opposing qualities do not clash at the same level. In the same way the village layout distributes opposition in space so that these oppositions are complementary and not conflictive.

It may be argued, I think, that this manipulation of male and female elements in the lineage genealogy gives evidence of a "kind of experimentation or play of fashion," as Kroeber called it, in which the Fang are using and distributing the different valences of maleness and femaleness in the social structure in order to provide for themselves an aesthetically satisfying fiction. The distribution of these opposites, maleness and femaleness, in other words, satisfies aesthetic criteria and in doing so provides for viability. The opposition between maleness and femaleness is not only found in the social structure, incidentally, but is carried throughout Fang world view and is evident in dualistic sets such as hot (male) and cold (female), night and moon (female) and day and sun (male), earth (female) and sky (male). These sets of oppositions suggest an elemental opposition—a dualism in fact—in Fang culture itself which though it has clear manifestation in social structure does not exhaust its importance there but lies behind all cultural manifestations.

I shall return to this problem of dualism in the conclusion. I want first, in a final attempt to link the principles of opposition and vitality, however, to consider what the Fang mean by maturity and what for them are the sources of maturity. For I think it may be argued that a truly mature man is an object of aesthetic appreciation.

The mature man (*nyamoro*, real man) is a man between thirty-five and fifty-five, at the height of his powers. The idea of his maturity and of his power stems, in good part, from the Fang theory of physiology. This is not an easily clarified subject. What is clear is that a man receives his essential forces and powers from the blood of his mother and the sperm of his father. The maternal element goes to make the flesh, blood, and bloody organs of the body cavity, particularly the heart. The paternal element goes to make up his bones, sinews, and brains. Just as the creation of the child is dependent upon the harmonious working together of these ordinarily incompatible elements, blood and sperm, so

the full power of the adult is dependent upon the working together of the two sets of body members which the two essential substances of coitus have brought into being. A man with strong brain, bones, and sinew but with weak blood, organs, and heart, will confront life as inadequately as he who has strong blood but weak sinews. The brain, the bones, and the sinews are the center of the will, the driving force, the determination of a man, while the blood and the heart are the sources of reflection, deliberation, and thought (*asiman*, thought, that which gives direction to determination). Taking direction without determination is as useless to the Fang as determination expressed without direction. In a complete man, as in a vital ancestral figure, these opposing sets of attributes are held in balance so as to work together in complementary fashion. Out of the complementary relationship between opposites, life—vitality—is most fully achieved by the *nyamoro*. He, the mature man, most successfully combines the biological heritage of female blood and male seminal fluid—willful determination and thoughtful direction. Youth tends to be too active, too willful; age, too deliberative, too tranquil. Here appears again vitality arising out of the appropriate relationship between opposites.

There is not space to examine the principles of opposition and vitality in Fang aesthetic reactions to other manifestations of their culture. These principles at work might best be shown in Fang comment upon traditional dances where their gustatory appreciation in the vitality of the dance rises out of the presence of oppositions: the male drummers, the female dancers; the low sound of the drum, the high pitched and falsetto voices of the women; and, of course, the customary scheme by which the dancers face each other in two opposed lines. These principles of opposition and vitality might also be followed into the new syncretist cult of Bwiti as they express themselves in the ritual under elaboration in that cult. Even without these further examples, I hope it is sufficiently clear that when Fang assume a posture of aesthetic scrutiny the presence of skillfully related oppositions constitutes an important part of their delight and appreciation. This is so because vitality arises out of complementary opposition and for them what is aesthetically satisfying is the same as what is vitally alive.

#### IV

The data derived from the Fang, the extent to which the principle of opposition arises in many different areas of Fang life, indicate that there is an underlying duality in Fang culture. This duality is manifestly institutionalized in the latter-day syncretist cult of Bwiti—a religious movement designed to restore integrity, harmony, and regularity to lives greatly disturbed by acculturation. The Fang members of Bwiti oppose the left hand to the right hand in ways that Hertz long ago argued, they



oppose the earth to the sky, male to female, northeast to southwest, night to day, hot to cold. In fact, it is easy to construct for the Fang Bwist a table of symbolic classification—sets of opposed values such as we have given above—in which the pairs of opposite terms are analogically related by what Needham calls the “principle of complementary dualism.” This principle has been explored recently by Needham for the Purum and Meru, Beidelman for the Kaguru, and Faron for the Mapuche. While such systematic analysis of the coherence of symbolic values and the relation of the dualistic symbol system to the social structure are important extensions of the original Durkheimian insight, I have limited myself here, using terms from the Fang’s own aesthetic vocabulary, to show how aesthetic appreciation rests upon the presence of vitality in the object or action and that this in turn rests upon the appropriate relationship—whether this be a balanced relationship or a complementary relationship—between opposites.

Two larger questions remain to be considered. Anthropologists sometimes employ the term *logico-aesthetic integration* to refer to the manner in which the disparate elements of culture were brought into some systematic relationship. The first question then is how does logico-aesthetic integration obtain in a dualistic culture where oppositions play such an important role? Second, what about this overarching question—the impact of social structure upon aesthetic principles? Is it because opposition is a fact of social life that it becomes such an important component of aesthetic appreciation?

In respect to logico-aesthetic integration—if we mean by that the extent to which patterns of behavior conform coherently to a given logic and a given set of aesthetic principles—two things are to be said. First, if one admits that analogy is a kind of logic, then there is no reason why integration should not prevail in a system of analogic oppositions; and in fact we have argued that this is the only kind of integration that makes sense to the Fang. Second, in respect to the aesthetic component of this integration, it must be pointed out that true aesthetic integration of a total culture, if not an impossibility, can only, in any case, be the consequence of “relentless concentration on the whole life process as an art.” Thompson has argued that this exists among the Hopi. I do not find it among the Fang. They are too materialistic and opportunistic to be constantly preoccupied with living out all of life in an aesthetically satisfying manner. For most Fang passable interrelationships—relationships which are functional, goal-reaching, and gratifying—can be established without benefit of much aesthetic elaboration. But it should also be said, and this is a measure perhaps of acculturative disintegration, that there is, except among the members of Bwiti, less concern with the aesthetic satisfactions offered by objects and actions than formerly. One can see this in an increased tendency towards shabby and unbalanced

construction in village layout and upkeep. Formerly the Fang proceeded on the road to gratification with more emphasis on aesthetic means and with more realization that aesthetic experience itself was an important kind of gratification.

Despite this negative data, there are still many actions and objects in Fang life that provoke a posture of aesthetic criticism. I have examined some of them, notably the ancestor figures and the behavior of a mature man. And of course aesthetic principles may be in operation in Fang culture even though no deliberate and overt attempt is made on the part of the culture carriers to apply or make out these principles. In fact, instead of asking, To what extent do aesthetic principles reflect the necessities of social structure? it might rather be stated inversely, To what extent does social structure reflect aesthetic principles? Is society aesthetic preference drawn large?

### *Conclusion*

To such large questions only large answers can be given. The data suggests that what are given in Fang life, what are basic, are two sets of oppositions. One is spatial, right and left, northeast and southwest; the other is qualitative, male and female. Both the social structure and the aesthetic life elaborate on these basic oppositions and create vitality in so doing. This elaboration, however, in both areas is creative, a fashioning in some sense according to what is pleasing. To this extent the social structure is no different than the ancestral figure; it is the expression of aesthetic principles at work. And the fundamental principle at work among the Fang is in doubleness, duality, and opposition lie vitality, in oneness and coincidence, death

In both aesthetics and the social structure the aim of the Fang is not to resolve opposition and create identity but to preserve a balanced opposition. This is accomplished either through alternation as in the case with complementary filiation or in the behavior of a full man; or it is done by skillful aesthetic composition in the same time and space as is the case with the ancestor statues or cult ritual. This objective is reflected in inter-clan relations. The Fang, like many non-literate people, lived in a state of constant enmity with other clans. However, their object was not that of exterminating each other or otherwise terminating the hostility in favor of one clan or another. The hostility was regarded as a natural condition of social life, and their concern was to keep this enmity in permanent and balanced opposition. So in their aesthetic life, they aimed at a permanent and balanced opposition. In this permanent tension between opposites lay the source of vitality in Fang life. When this balanced arrangement is upset, as it has been by acculturation, then one can only expect that some of the vitality will go out of that life.

# 44 Artist and Critic in an African Society



Paul Bohannon

IN THE PREVIOUS ARTICLE (II:43) WE ENCOUNTERED THE FIGURE OF THE native art critic. If the necessity for this encounter has not already been made clear, Bohannon renders it explicit by beginning his essay with a reference to the work of Benedetto Croce: *To understand an aesthetic and at least equally an ethos, we must come to grips with more than their products. We must also investigate the way those products are accepted or rejected, and between those polar extremes we must attempt to understand the process by which original artistic conceptions arise and how they are modified in the act of creation. Despite certain current ideologies of extreme individualism in our own culture, artistic creativity is basically a social act. It arises out of a long history of collective efforts, and the artist in throes of creativity remains subject to an audience.*

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Croce, in what is undoubtedly his most widely read statement, in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, insisted that it was neither enough to use art objects to explain the ethos of an age, nor yet enough to subject the objects to 'aesthetic' judgment without reference to the ethos of the age in which they were produced. Rather, art is of a piece with the rest of an epoch, and in order to understand the aesthetics behind the art, we must understand the attitude towards art, as one of many attitudes which make up the ethos of the epoch.

Translated into terms of a student of primitive art, Croce's dictum would read something like this: it is not enough to use art objects to explain an exotic culture, nor yet to subject the objects to aesthetic judgement without a knowledge of that culture. Rather, we must understand the attitude toward art which is a part of the culture in question.

It has been repeatedly stressed that in order to reach this desired end, we must discover the background, social position, training, motivation and aesthetic principles of the artist. Only a few anthropologists have in fact investigated these difficult matters in the field, and rather fewer have published their findings, but the precept is put to us insistently. It is, perhaps, the oldest precept now before students of primitive art.

Therefore, heeding Professor Whitehead's advice that we are likely to make most progress if we question the assumption longest unquestioned, it might be well to take a new look at what we mean by 'studying the artist' in primitive societies. Will 'studying the artist' really provide the information we need in order to evaluate primitive art?

Ask the same question about contemporary art: can 'studying the artist' in contemporary society explain contemporary art? By itself it undoubtedly cannot. It elicits the artist's motivation, it elucidates his personal aesthetics, and it clarifies technical problems. It may even help to solve some of the many difficult Western problems about 'creativity'. But it cannot explain the reason that some art is accepted and other is not, nor why some is considered better than others.

It would seem—and again the point is Croce's—that there is a dimension in art evaluation which goes far beyond the artist. It is the dimension which is added by what we today would call contemporary criticism. Surely, we need both the study of the contemporary artist and the study of contemporary criticism to arrive at aesthetic principles. We might, for our purposes, even define aesthetics as the relationship between criticism and art objects, for the relationship between artist and the objects is the problem of 'creativity'. (Obviously, some and perhaps the most telling art critics are artists themselves. For analytical purposes, however, we can divide these functions.)

The question is, then, are we interested in comparative creativity? If, as Westerners, we probably are, we must go to the creators of art for

our information. But where do we get our information on comparative aesthetics? Aesthetics means the study of the relationships between art and all that bundle of attitudes and activities which we in the modern world call criticism. Comparative aesthetics would surely establish means of classification of such relationships and, on a practical level, means by which one set of relationship ideas can be made to supplement and differentiate any of the others.

In so far as we are interested in studying the aesthetics of primitive art, then, we need several sorts of things and information: (1) the art objects, (2) a wide knowledge of the general ethnography of the people who made the objects, (3) a rather specific knowledge of the criticism of the objects by members of the society which used them, and (4) a general knowledge of comparative aesthetics. Now all of these different things, ideas and disciplines are available to the student—except the third. While it is true that we know very little about artists in primitive societies, it is safe to say that we know very much less about criticism in primitive societies.

These problems did not occur to me while I was in the field. I was following the 'oldest precept'. Therefore, while I was studying the Tiv of central Nigeria, I kept chasing artists. Tiv produce no really great art in the sense that the Yoruba and some Cameroons peoples do produce great art. But art of one sort or another enters into many phases of their lives, and some of it pleases Europeans, a little of it even compelling.

Tiv artists are not as easy to find as they were fifteen or twenty years before I worked among them. Mr. K. C. Murray of the Nigerian Museum in Lagos, has much more information on them, gathered in the 1930's, than I was able to get in the late 40's and early 1950's. I never found a first-rate wood carver who was willing to be watched at work, though I have watched three mediocre ones at work. Nor have I ever seen Tiv brass casting, although I know several men who worked at it sporadically.

Nevertheless, I saw quite a bit of Tiv art. Even so, I originally thought that I had nothing to say about it because I had not seen and made minute notes on the processes. Then, as I went through my notes for other purposes, I began to find an occasional reference to art—not to artists, but to the art objects themselves. As I found more, I began to realize two points: that these comments formed the core of a critical system which might (with systematic field investigation) be turned into a fairly complete Tiv aesthetic, and that Tiv are interested in the art—not in the artist.

The viewpoint of Westerners, interested primarily in creativity, is completely different from that of the Tiv in this respect. Tiv, indeed, use the word 'create' (*gba*) for working in wood—its only other use is

for God's creation of the World.<sup>1</sup> But the primary field of Tiv interest is not on the verbal notion of *gba* or creation, but rather on the objects which are the result of it. Tiv are more interested in the ideas conveyed by a piece of art than they are in its manufacture, just as in their religion they are far more interested in the Creation than in the Creator.

This capacity on the part of Tiv to come to grips with a piece of art as it is in itself rather than as a tangible result of creation, gives their critical ideas a forthrightness which we might well envy: it resembles that 'firm and sure judgement in artistic matters . . . never raised to the level and consistency of a theory' which Croce ascribes to the ancients before they were bothered by the Christian notion of soul.

My most vivid encounter with such art criticism among the Tiv came when I was watching an artist—not a very good one—carve a wooden figure of a woman. The carving, which I had commissioned from him, was about eighteen inches high and, like all African sculpture, was worked from a chunk of log while it was still green. As he worked, and I say by silently watching, a youngster from his compound appeared.

The youngster said, by way of greeting, the equivalent of 'Grandfather, you are carving [creating—*gba*] a woman.'

The old man replied that such was indeed the case.

'What are those three bumps on her belly?' the youngster asked.

The old man laid down his adze and eyed the youngster who had interrupted him. 'The middle one,' he said impatiently, 'is her navel.'

The boy was silent for a moment but spoke again just as the old man reached for his adze, 'Then what are the other two bumps?'

The old man barely concealed his contempt for questions about so obvious a point. 'Those are her breasts.'

'Way down there?' the youngster asked.

'They've fallen!' the artist fairly shouted.

'But, grandfather, even if they had fallen, they would not . . .'

The old man grabbed up his adze. 'All right, all right,' he muttered, and with three perfectly aimed blows the three bumps came off.

I noted, when I wrote up this incident, that the youngster, who had been three years in school, had acquired an aesthetic of naturalism, and that the elder had not. I was annoyed that my carving was no longer 'purely' Tiv and failed to consider the incident as an interaction of artist and critic.

When the artist had finished his work, and I had paid him for it, his only comment was, 'It did not turn out too badly' (*idurwe vihi yum*

<sup>1</sup> There is a homonym, *gba*—in so far as one can distinguish homonyms in an unwritten language—which means 'to fall' and 'to suffer (an act)', but the two sets of ideas are said to be utterly unrelated.

ga). I recorded this comment at the time only because I did not really agree with it.

This incident should have told me that Tiv, in many instances at least, care who creates a given object as little as they care about the creative process. Art is, among them, an epiphenomenon to play, religion, prestige and most other aspects of life. Indeed, much of it is a sort of 'community' art, a true folk art in which the artist is as unimportant as the composer of folk music.

It was several months later, in another part of Tivland altogether, that I became fully aware of this communal aspect of Tiv art, and that I again noted the phrase, 'It didn't turn out too badly.' This new area was swampy, and I cut myself a stick to help me traverse the slick swamps without falling. After a week or so, a young man from a nearby compound told me that I must not use that stick any longer: it was an old woman's stick and did not become a man of my position. When I asked what sort of stick I should have, he replied that he would make me one which was suitable. A few days later, he returned with a staff which he called a 'stick of a young elder.' It was about six feet long; on it were several bands blacked with soot which he had set with the sap of the *ikpine* tree. Into the black, he had carved several series of designs.

The stick was very handsome, and before long almost every male in the countryside was making himself a stick of this sort. I copied several of the designs and watched a number of them being made. The most astounding feature, to me, was that comparatively few of the designs were made by a single individual. As I sat watching a young man of about thirty carve a stick one day, he was called away. He laid aside his stick and the double-edged knives with which he was cutting the design. A guest came in a few moments later, picked up the stick and added a few designs. A little later, he handed it on to someone else. Four men put designs on that stick before the owner returned and finished it. When he had done so, he held it out for me to copy and said, 'It turned out pretty well, didn't it?'

This 'communal' aspect of all work, whether artistic or utilitarian, showed up again when I bought a couple of adzes, got some wood and tried to make sculpture of my own. Since I have no talent whatever for sculpture, I was very soon disgusted and turned to making stools and chairs instead. But I was not allowed to do it myself. The moment I rested, some bystander would take up the adze and get the work a little farther forward. I, in Western tradition, had a feeling of complete frustration because my 'creativity' and my ability were being challenged. For a few days I tried to insist that I wanted to do the work myself, but soon had to give it up because everyone thought it silly and because no one could remember my foible. Eventually several of our chairs and

stools 'didn't turn out too badly.' I had a hand in all of them, but they are not my handiwork—the whole compound and half the countryside had worked on them.

Most Tiv men are competent at turning out these chairs, stools, walking sticks and the like. They appreciate a 'good one' but they take comparatively little pains to plan them so that they will be good. There are, however, a few men who work alone and insist on doing all the work; they are regarded as specialists. I knew one man who made chairs from *gbaiye* wood, when he could get it. He refused to let anyone else touch a piece he was working on. He charged about ten shillings each for making a larger Tiv chair; the price was very much higher than usual, but the chairs always 'came out well', as was recognized throughout the countryside.

Weaving, like stick carving, is very often a communal activity. However, preparing the cloth for resist-dyeing is not. Tiv today sew patterns into the cloth with raffia rather than tie them as they did when Mr. Murray made his observations. Although some men sew their designs in a pre-planned fashion, many others do not. The first time I saw a man sewing raffia almost at random on to a cloth he was preparing for resist dyeing, paying attention to a political discussion rather than to any pattern and obviously having no plan, I was upset. I finally interrupted the business at hand to ask him why he did not pay attention to what he was doing. He told me, and though I understood his words I did not grasp their full meaning until later, that one does not look at a pattern until it is finished: then one looks to see if it has come out well. If this one does not come out well, he said, 'I will sell it to the Ibo; if it does, I shall keep it. And if it comes out extraordinarily well, I shall give it to my mother-in-law.'

Figure carvings are almost always made by an individual artist. In their religious rituals, Tiv need a certain number of stakes to represent females and another sort to represent males. The only requirement is that the stake be of a particular shape (pointed for the female principle, rounded for the male), and that they have representational eyes and mouth. Some people, even today, however, pay comparatively large sums (up to ten shillings) to artists to make figure carvings to be used as such representational stakes. The figurine, of course, is ritually no more effective than a stick with three holes gouged in it, but figurines bring prestige to the owner and, even more importantly, they 'please the eye'.

In the criticism of these pieces, two points are stressed: first, that the owner was thoughtful enough to want to please himself and everyone else, and second that it makes a 'better' stake (*ihambe*). I have little doubt that had I asked questions and primed conversations, I could have gathered (from some people at least) lists of traits and characteristics which



were approved and reasons why they were approved. Unfortunately, I did not do so. With my own cultural biases, I thought this was the sort of question one asked artists.

My most revealing experience in the matter of art criticism among the Tiv passed, like some of the others, in misunderstanding and a minor annoyance. A man named Akise, who was of my true age-set (not one of the men some fifteen years older with whom I was associated, by Tiv themselves, on a prestige basis), told me that his kinsman from central Tivland was coming to see him and to sell decorated calabashes in the local market. I said I would like to meet the kinsman and watch him work. Akise told me to come up to his compound the evening before market.

The artist kinsman was friendly, but not very communicative about his work. He showed me his tools and his wares. He reconvinced me of something I knew already: Tiv designs have no mystic or religious symbolism, and are at most only a stylization of natural elements like lizards, swallows and drinking gourds. When asked when he worked, he said, 'When my heart tells me'—a standard Tiv answer for anything they do which they have not particularly thought about. When I asked him what his favourite design was, he said that he usually liked the one he was working on, so he liked them all. When I asked him why he carved calabashes instead of carving wooden figures, he replied that he did not have any talent or training for carving wood (literally, he did not 'know the root' of it), and in any case wooden carvings were sometimes used by the *mbatsav*, or witches, and carved calabashes were only used as gifts to girl friends. This man, I decided, had no aesthetics.

At the time, I was a little put off by Akise, who insisted on breaking into the conversation. During my questioning of his kinsman, he carried on a long harangue about which of the calabashes he liked best, and which one least, and placed the two dozen or so in a row, in order of merit. I asked the artist if he agreed in Akise's judgement. He said he probably did, but he liked them all well enough. I noted (without realizing its full implications) that Akise considered himself a considerable art critic, and I finally turned to copy some of the designs and some of the reasons why he liked them. We were unfortunately interrupted when I had completed only one copy, and we never returned to the subject.

The design on the calabash was divided into quarters, for which Akise expressed different preferences. One, he said, was best because the black spots (made by burning with the flat of a hot knife) were in the right place. Another was least good because there were too many black places and they did not balance. The artist agreed but said that if you removed any of the black it would be worse. The lid, as a whole, was considered better than the calabash itself, because the balance of black was better and because the two sides were alike.

Either in my notes or in my memory, I have other references to people who have expressed choices and criticism, giving reasons: I have on several occasions heard winnowing trays praised for a tasteful pattern in the weaving or because they were absolutely round. I have also, on one occasion, heard a man say of a winnowing tray (which I also admired) that it was attractive because it had a very fine bulge on one side. I have heard people praise Tiv chairs because of their symmetry, but also because interesting shapes in the wood were retained.

Tentatively, from what I remember, it seems to me that Tiv admire symmetry, but also admire what they consider tasteful asymmetry. They admire pieces of sculpture which make an idea more intense. Further than this, I would not want to go until I have returned to Tivland to discuss the matter.

However, I did learn this: I was wrong in my field work because, Western fashion, I paid too much attention to artists, and when the artists disappointed me I came away with nothing. When I return, I shall search out the critics. And in Tivland, almost every man is a critic. Because there are no specialists in taste and only a few in the manufacture of art, every man is free to know what he likes and to make it if he can. It seems to me that as many Tiv are aware of why they like something as are aware of the implications of any other aspects of their culture. In all spheres, this is a faculty which varies greatly from person to person. There are as many reasoned art critics in Tiv society as there are reasoned theologians or political theorists, from whom we study Tiv ideas about their religion and politics.

Problems of creation in primitive societies are interesting; but they may be overshadowed, from the standpoint of their significance in the societies concerned, by the problems of criticism. We can arrive at an aesthetic for a people by studying the relation of criticism among them to the art objects somewhat more successfully than by studying the relation of creation to the art objects.



## 45 The Role of the Composer

Dennison Nash

HAVING TREATED THE GRAPHIC AND PLASTIC ARTS AND TOUCHED ON THE role of the artist, we move into music and come to grips with the composer. Actually, music as an area of culture has been subject to much broader and deeper study by social scientists than have the other arts, with the possible exception of what may somewhat misleadingly be called "literature" since it includes mythology and much that exists only orally. The field of ethnomusicology, at any rate, resembles linguistics in overlapping academic anthropology while having a major and somewhat autonomous portion where the work is carried out by non-anthropologists. More about this, however, in the next selection (II:46).

The present article is by a sociologist. If this fact were not so blatantly announced, I think it could not be guessed and certainly not from anything to be found in the essay. The discussion will be found to employ far-ranging comparisons, going through time and place and presenting a remarkable battery of data derived from a wide variety of cultures. Professor Nash also makes social structural analyses and touches on other familiar anthropological themes and concerns, doing so through the medium of methods shared by sociology and anthropology.

SOURCE: *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 5 (1961), pp. 81-94, 187-201. Reprinted by permission of the author and the Society for Ethnomusicology.

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*Perhaps it is best covered by a designation proposed by Leslie White, who called this kind of analysis "culturology."*

*The article is really too long for the Readings, but it touches on so many issues raised elsewhere in totally different contexts, that it gives us an opportunity to review these things in a refreshingly novel situation. As a result, the editor could not bring himself to suggest a cut version. This had its price, for it meant forgoing any opportunity of snipping certain few parts with which the editor deeply disagrees. But the overall brilliance of the essay is inseparably linked with the breadth and scope of its treatment. The reader can do no worse than exercise the function with which the last two selections have dealt, that of critic.*

The problem of this paper is to outline the uniformities and diversity of the composer's role in human societies and to relate various attributes of the role to the social context of which the role is a part. In addressing myself to this task I have encountered two major obstacles: 1) Inadequate data concerning the composer in various cultures; (2) Musical idols derived from modern western cultures.

The difficulty of gleaning accurate data about the composer in our own society may spring from the conflict between art and science which received particular impetus during the Romantic period in western art. Though this conflict also may have affected anthropologists' reports, the general lack of focus on the composer in their studies seems due mainly to the fact that the composer as a specialist does not exist in many primitive societies. As Roberts says, "The concept of the musician as a socially distinct individual hardly exists in most primitive societies, for music making and song composing are indulged in by any who have the desire and ability."

This was the first idol to interfere with a truly cross-cultural perspective on the problem: The composer as a specialist does not exist in many societies. Where the person who composes *is* a specialist he may combine various performing activities and instrument-making with his composing. Other artistic talents such as literature or dance may be linked with his musical production. Or he may be a magical or religious practitioner. It is only in our society where a person can pass as a composer and nothing else.

Our image of the composer as an arch-innovator constitutes a second idol. The extreme emphasis which we place on the new and unique does not exist everywhere. In fact the most valued form of music in some societies is that which follows tradition perfectly. Now if composition is taken to include all musical innovation great or small, it is conceivable that, granted mistakes and conscious and unconscious individual style, every musical rendering involves composition. The improviser and performer, according to this view, actually are engaging in some kind of composition.

As Beals and Hoiijer have pointed out, the composer and other artists always innovate within the framework of some cultural tradition. Every musical, as well as social, event involves a mixture of stability and change. The relative proportions of new and old in a particular musical work probably will vary according to the values of a culture. There is no *a priori* reason to suppose that it is more difficult to innovate than to not innovate music. The most useful cross-cultural perspective, I believe, is to regard all music-making to contain an element of composition regardless of the element of innovation involved.

A third idol is the concept of the composer as a creator of art or serious music. In our culture this style not only is distinguished from other styles such as jazz and popular music, but it is judged to be a superior form of music by its devotees and others. However, the attributed superiority is derived from a specific system of values shared by these devotees, not criteria which have a necessary cross-cultural validity. There may be one or several styles of music in a culture. If there are several, they may be rated according to the prevailing system of values. But the investigator with a cross-cultural view must abjure any such rating as a means of selecting his object of investigation. Whether music is for the few or for the many should be facts of equal interest to him. In short he must be interested in *all* music and the persons who produce it.

The destruction of our musical idols leads to a cross-cultural definition of the composer. He is one who innovates (to a greater or lesser degree) within the framework of some musical style or styles. He may combine this with other activities, musical or non-musical, in his own life. He may or may not cooperate with others to create a musical work. The ideal-typical case would be the person whose life is focussed on the art of composing. Thus, I Letring of Bali, says Covarrubias, ". . . spoke and thought of nothing but gamelans and music, and it was said that he dreamed his composition."

As a guiding hypothesis I suggest that the social conditions which bring forth such individuals as I Letring in significant numbers and provide a role for them to express themselves in are: (1) Valuation of a developing musical tradition; (2) Considerable social differentiation. The work of Childe, Linton, Sachs, and White suggests that these two social factors probably covary, though the existence of one will not always "call for" the presence of the other. The general line of reasoning: increasing control over the natural environment permits more time to be spent by non-producers in the development of the arts. Those specialist non-producers will be supported whose activity is valued. The composer is such a specialist, and his "devotion" to musical creativity will be a function of these two factors. No attempt is being made here to suggest an inevitable line of evolution for the composer's role, but to state those variables

which account in large part for its variability in form from culture to culture.

## 1. *Characteristics of the Composer's Role*

### A. SELECTIVE FACTORS IN COMPOSER RECRUITMENT

In *The Study of Man* Linton says, "Persons with special talents . . . are likely to appear in either sex and in any social class." He argues further that by the method of ascription societies may prevent these special talents from developing and thus incur "an actual loss through failure to use these gifts to the full." A consideration of the degree to which factors other than ability and desire operate to determine who will be recruited to the composer's role is part of the general question about selective factors in recruitment raised by Linton. There is no *a priori* reason why ascription should play less of a part in securing composers than other specialists. What do the data reveal?

1) *Ascription by Sex* As a general rule in any society the composition of music tends to be monopolized by one or the other sex. The exceptions to this rule appear to arise in situations where the distinction between the male and female role is minimized, as in the Byzantine Church, and where specialization in the field of music is not far advanced, as in Toco, Trinidad, or the society of the Medieval troubadors. The fact that men are selected to be composers in some societies, women in others, and both men and women in a few exceptional cases strongly suggests that native composing talent is not sex-linked and that the general tendency towards a division of labor in this regard is due to social selection.

In societies where specialization in the creation of music is more advanced as in Bali, Chopi, and modern America, one finds few, if any, women among the ranks of eminent composers. This may be due to the fact that specialization tends to weed out women who, because of the value placed on their reproductive and child-rearing functions, cannot devote themselves sufficiently to training for, and practicing in, the role to achieve eminence. The ideal-typical composer, then, probably will be a man.

2) *Ascription by Kinship* In our society the fact that a person is related to a particular musician does not appear to act to select him as a composer recruit. In a group of twenty-three eminent American-born composers of serious music which I studied none had parents who were composers and only eight had parents who were performing musicians. Ascription by kinship does not act to secure composers in our society, and if the Bach family is excepted as an isolated phenomenon, it is possible to push this generalization back as far in western history as the data will allow, i.e., the time of Palestrina. To do so is to disagree with Ein-

stein who argues, "If it was the rule before 1800 that musicians came from musicians, it was the rule in the Romantic period that they came from the educated middle class." But a survey of noted composers born before and after 1760 (the Bach family excepted) does not show ascription by kinship to be more important in the earlier period than the later in recruiting composers.

On the other hand if musical performers only are considered, the possibility of ascription by kinship appears to be increased. Scheinfeld has presented data for modern western society which show that a parent who has performing talent is more likely to see his child become a performer; and if both parents are performers the probability that their child will be a performer is increased further. These data suggest that the same rules may not apply to both composer and performer recruitment. I would speculate (though weakly, because of the lack of controls in these studies) that composing talent does not run in families as a general rule; therefore, ascription by kinship cannot hope to work in a society where highly specialized demands are made on the composer.

In the strict sense of the word ascription does not occur unless there is no reference to the individual's wishes or abilities in determining what he will be in life. However, there obviously are degrees of ascription. What are being explored here are factors which tend to limit an individual's life chances. In the West we have tended to insist that talent and desire, not kin relationship, be a sign of the chosen. Having musical parents may have given direction and support in specific cases and therefore contributed an element of ascription, but on the whole kinship as an ascriptive factor does not operate in western society.

In other societies similar conditions prevail. Ascription by kinship acts infrequently to secure composer recruits, and where it does prevail achievement still is possible. In Nupe, for example, the role of drummer (composer-performer) usually is passed on from father to son, but non-kin may apprentice themselves to a drummer. Among the Nootka every family of note has its master singer-composer who, ideally, is one of its members. However, the determining factor in the recruitment of this person is not family membership, but talent. If no one in the family is sufficiently talented someone from outside the family must be hired for potlatches or feasts. Finally, since composing and performing music is not confined to the role of master singer-composer and since other music makers (who attain their role without any reference to kin relationship) also exist in this society, the part which ascription by kinship plays in selecting composers seems not to be very great.

In Nootka as well as in some other North American Indian tribes certain songs are considered to be family property which is inherited in the same manner as other forms of wealth. This may be the reason why it is preferred that master singer-performers (who use these songs)

should be family members. They are acquiring and using family wealth; they can be controlled readily by family sanctions; they provide the safest and most appropriate "display case" for this kind of family possession.

The concept of music as property which has been raised in the Nootka example invites comparison with the situation in our own society where property is more of an individual affair and its use more a matter of contract than kinship. The element of ascription clearly is foreign to such a situation. Continuing the comparison still further, there seems to have been a greater emphasis on *producing* wealth in our society and more on *display* in Nootka. If this analysis is true it may be argued that a master singer-composer in Nootka should be a performer first and a composer second. This reasoning is supported by the manner in which valuable songs are acquired there. They do not have to be composed, but they may be received as gifts or inherited. Now if the Scheinfeld hypothesis that performing talent runs in families is cross-culturally applicable, it is possible to understand why the role of master singer often may be ascribed to a family member. He is more likely to be a performer than a composer, and thus meet the primary demand for display. Achievement, then, would play a larger part in the development of top-notch Nootka composers. Unfortunately, the data do not allow a definitive test of this argument.

The overall picture which emerges from this discussion is of the triumph of composing talent over any limitations imposed by kinship requirements in the attainment of the role of composer. Where such limitations exist, there are alternative avenues of recruitment.

### 3) *Ascription by Non-kin Groups or Categories*

a. *Status Groups.* The existence of musician castes in some societies would seem to severely limit the supply of talented musician recruits. However, in no case that I have discovered does a single caste have a monopoly on music-making in a society. In the Central Provinces of India, for example, Russell reports nine castes whose primary or secondary occupation was music-making. Moreover, a musician caste background was not always required to become a musician. Some of the most distinguished composer-performers India has produced, e.g., Tyagaraja, Tansen, Tagore, had no professional caste background. Thus, because many different sectors of society are tapped for recruits, a broad range of native talent is assured.

Considering human society as a whole, composing talent appears to fairly well circumvent the status group as an ascriptive factor. First, take the considerable number of simpler societies in which anyone may compose. In these societies differences in status neither are very great nor elaborately structured. The fact that the sometime composer may come from any sector of these societies does not do much to delineate status



as an ascriptive factor. In Bali, though, where status differences are elaborated, they do not operate to limit or enhance the possibility of becoming a composer. A Balinese composer may come from any social rank. The role of troubador in Medieval Europe, also, was not subject to status ascription. Both nobility and commoners contributed to the ranks of these poet-composers.

Eminent composers in our own society are drawn from families of above-average status. This pattern apparently derives from the Romantic period in Europe when, according to Einstein, it became customary for recruits to come from "the educated middle classes." But it would be a mistake to infer that there have been status limitations in the selection of all composers in our society. Serious music in the west has been patronized by the church, nobility, and middle-classes. Considering this tradition it is no wonder that it still has not become fully democratized in its recruiting process. Jazz is another style of music which has drawn its composer-performers from a limited status range. Its practitioners—largely Negroes—have come from the lower social ranks. Popular music is created by composers who originate on the average in a somewhat lower social status than serious composers. In sum, certain status ranges tend to monopolize the production of different styles of music in our culture, but all social ranks seem to have had an opportunity to become music-makers.

b. *Ausländer*. Sachs argues that "the manure of novelty has been conveyed in the cultivation of music chiefly by foreigners." Do *Ausländer*, rather than natives, tend to fill the ranks of composers in a society? The history of the west makes a partial case for this hypothesis. In the courts of seventeenth century Europe most composers were Italians. In south-eastern Europe and Asia minor it has been the tradition for Gypsies to play a large part in the composition and execution of music. Sinclair says that at the turn of the twentieth century all public musicians in Hungary and the western Orient were Gypsies. In contemporary American society the leading composers have been Europeans: Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and Hindemith. These strangers are at once agents of invention and diffusion who may be stimulated to additional creativity by their semi-detached role in a host society.

Beyond western societies it becomes very difficult to pick up data concerning the Sachs hypothesis. Traveling musicians sometimes are mentioned, but most of these seem to be natives of the society who move about from community to community. Whether they are true foreigners is difficult to ascertain. Of course, in folk societies one would not expect to encounter many strangers, but in those situations where trans-culturation has occurred there is a deplorable lack of data on the conditions under which foreigners are taken on as composers. My hunch (which elaborates Sachs' hypothesis) is that in general the greater the inter-cul-

tural contact the greater the rate of cultural change in the cultures involved, and thus the greater the desire for novelty by its more "liberal" natives. Under these conditions anyone who can meet such a demand would tend to be recruited as a composer. Since strangers may be more prone to novelty than dyed-in-the-wool natives, they would be more sought after as composers.

4) *Personality Type as an Ascriptive Factor* No single personality type is recruited into the ranks of eminent American composers of serious music. Even the label of individualist does not fit all of these composers. Though of a variety of personality types, the majority do share enough pathological signs on the Rorschach to be judged by the usual clinical standards neurotic, psychotic, or borderline psychotic. The idea of the artist as a kind of supernaturally-inspired madman has been with us since slightly before the Romantic period when the artist began to feel himself separated from, and at odds with, his world. Though this idea appears to be an actuality, it should not be assumed that madness is a necessary prerequisite to composition. A few eminent Americans show no pathology, and the data available for pre-Romantic composers seems to indicate that usually they were not subject to mental disturbance. Bach is an example of an apparently well-adjusted personality who nevertheless produced extraordinary music.

For primitive societies Nettl says that "proficiency in composition occasionally correlates with maladjustment to the culture and is often associated with religious activity." Perhaps the best illustrative example of this contention is the shaman among the Polar Eskimo. The true shaman, according to Radin, is a neurotic for whom religious conceptions and behavior (including musical composition and performance) function as a mode of adjustment. But if Radin is right about these people, it still is too much to maintain that the proficient manipulation of symbols (musical and/or religious) is the only form of adjustment open to the neurotic—or even this specific kind of neurotic (hysteric). A look at the American Negro jazzman will clarify this point. He has tended to carry the personal stigmata of an oppressed group, and he has found in jazz a precarious mode of adjustment to life. But not all Negroes work out their difficulties primarily through jazz. The world of criminal activities has been a notable mode of adjustment for these and other oppressed peoples. The personality stigmata, therefore, act as a selective factor only, not an all-determining one.

Under what social conditions do the presence of mental aberrations become a selective sign for composers? I believe that it is when music becomes for a people a vehicle to transport them out of this world. In western society this has been carried to an extreme in the Romantic movement. As Einstein says, people who have been bitten by the Romantic virus demand that they be "transported" by art. It follows that

the composer who is more likely to "transport" us out of this world would tend to be chosen from the ranks of those who stand apart from the normal run of men and whose personality predisposes them to other-worldly leaps of musical imagination.

5) *Conclusion* The data at hand suggest that extraneous factors, i.e., factors not involving musical talent directly, do not anywhere play a major part in selecting composers. Why is this so? I believe that it is because art is one of those few activities which can be so intrinsically satisfying as to sustain the individual practicing it—even in the face of public hostility or indifference. The individual may be dissuaded from becoming an artist only if the most powerful negative sanctions exist. This means that even in those societies where ascription, e.g., caste, operates, talented individuals not meeting the ascriptive criteria still may become composers. These people may or may not receive public rewards for their activities, but this is not crucial to them. They have their muse to follow, which is enough. However, the muse may not see to it that a society gets all the composers it wants. Then there must be a compromise with genius—the extent of the compromise being determined by the number of composers sought. Of course it is not only in the realm of music that such compromises are made. Each society, in line with its peculiar values, makes many compromises with the rich and varied human material that it receives.

#### B. THE POSITION OF THE COMPOSER IN SOCIETY

1) *Location* As societies lose their Folk-like characteristics, and if they are able, and want to support musicians, local talent may not suffice. This situation may give rise to wandering musicians who, like the traveling tinker, find their market or public in many communities, any one of which, on its own, could not support them. The wayfarers of the Middle Ages, the bands or companies in Nupe, the *virtuosi* of ancient Rome, and the touring performers in our own society are examples.

Where the urban trend has resulted in the establishment of sufficiently large and affluent communities, musicians will tend to locate themselves semi-permanently or permanently in them. Those musicians who carry on forays into the hinterland become the agents of diffusion from these culture centers. In turn, recruits are attracted to these centers because of their monopoly of taste and musical facilities. In our society New York is such a center. The musical establishments of church and court which have dominated the musical scene in many societies are so well-known that they need not be detailed here. It is the affluence of these centers and their valuation of music which have brought about the congregation of various musical specialists and a sophisticated audience—the essentials of a highly developed and complex art.

Nadel, in his study of Nupe, describes the transitional phase of the process described above. In Bida (urban center) music and dancing is provided by bands or companies of professionals who "are invited to perform at feasts and similar occasions, and also tour the country." These groups of urban professionals are drawn from a broader social range than in the village where kinship and locale are ascriptive factors. The economic base for their operations is provided by a noble family which orders music and dancing for many occasions. Such patronage provides the beginnings of a center of music. Other examples of incipient music establishments are provided by Hauser, in his description of the development of the post of court poet in the late Middle Ages, and Sachs, in his discussion of the rise of the court supported musician in ancient Israel. These represent the first stage in the process of centralization which is so far advanced in our own society.

So far, this discussion has concerned the broader role of musician. As was noted earlier the composer and performer, i.e., musician, are one in many societies. In this condition there is no reason to deal with the two separately. But as the level of complexity of music increases, differentiation between composer and performer begins to appear. The composer's music may become too difficult for his own performing ability, or he may begin composing for ensembles. In either case he now requires the cooperation of others if his music is to be performed. Thus the growing complexity of music forces the composer to depend on others if he wants an audience to hear his music. Now, he may become a leader of a musical ensemble as in Siuai or retire from performance altogether as did some troubadours of the Middle Ages.

Another reason for the differentiation of composer and performer is the recognition that some musicians are better than others at composing. The works of a particular composer-performer may be in demand by other musicians who want to perform his works along with their own. For example, Friedlander says that in ancient Rome "Menecles . . . frequently played on the *cithara* compositions by Timotheus . . . and Polydus." If this process continues some musicians may find themselves doing little else but creating music for others to perform.

The hypothesis is: As music becomes more complex centralization will occur. In a society where there is no system of written notation the composer who wishes to write for ensemble must have performers available directly. Otherwise the work he has *in mind* will never be *heard*. If he wishes to create a work for ensemble and dancers as in Chopi, then many performers must be available. At this stage of musical development the composer—if he wants to create complex music to be performed—is virtually helpless unless performers are available to him. But the performers, once they have learned his work, may be able to

wander about until they are ready for a new composition. A central location, under these circumstances, would seem to be somewhat more important to a composer than to a performer. This generalization, I believe, carries over into societies with systems of written notation. The composer must hear his music performed if he is to become expert. If he is not to be traveling around constantly (therefore cutting down on the time and energy available for composition) he must have a base where performers are fairly directly and regularly available to him. Therefore, he is more subject to centralization than the performer—and other artists who do not require performers. It is his own particular muse which makes it so.

2) *Social Status* The social standing of musicians (include composers) ranges from high to low in human society. Drummers, for example, in the Nupe village studied by Nadel are “at the bottom of the list of village ranks” while the great *Ustads* of India—both ascetic and non-ascetic—have acquired considerable wealth and/or prestige.

In the West the comparatively brief historical distance of one generation from the time of Haydn and Mozart to that of Beethoven and his contemporaries (eighteenth-nineteenth centuries) saw the status of the serious composer change from that of a more or less bound servant-craftsman to a free and often enormously celebrated artist. But it is not freedom which necessarily leads to high social rank. The eminent Americans mentioned previously experience freedom to an extreme degree, but almost none of them can earn a living in the specialty which they consider to be their life's work, i.e., composition. Though they manage, in most cases, to earn a comfortable living, they do so mostly by means of jobs which they say are extraneous to their “calling.” Nor are they able to enjoy *succès d'estime* (if not commercial success) in the public eye. The evidence indicates that the American audience for serious music can get along quite well without hearing *any* modern American music. The role of serious composer in our society, therefore, exists more by the definition of composers than by public definition. However, despite the low valuation of the role, the composer does have a place and an opportunity to compose.

When self-rating does not jibe with the public definition of one's status personal disaffection may be greater than in a clearly-defined low social rank. It is fairly easy to understand the dissatisfaction of the modern American composer; his fortunes are at a low ebb. But what may be difficult to comprehend is Liszt's comment about the Romantic artist. He says, “The status of the artist has been buried in complete insignificance.” This statement, coming from an age when the composer was, by our standards, somebody, can only be explained by the discrepancy between the public and private definitions of the status of composer. The contradiction, and the consequent disaffection of the composer, apparently

has existed for some time in Western society. The idea (shared enthusiastically by composers) that the artist is free and may be touched with greatness contains the seeds of anomie. The muse in our society is not an easy mistress, but she appears to hold out enough intrinsic rewards for men to continue to pursue her.

The role of musician frequently has been an avenue of vertical mobility in the West. The patronage of church, court, town and bourgeois has made it possible for talented individuals to rise—often considerably—in social standing. Where true patronage exists the patron is the principal conferrer of the composer's status, and it is by the study of patrons and their world that the life chances of the composer may be understood. Arnold Hauser's *The Social History of Art* illustrates the utility of this point of view for art in general.

There often are readily observable signs that the musician's status actually is defined by the patron. In the Nupe town, for example, the relationship between musician and patron-noble (and consequently the relative status of each) is recognized by a special term (*bara*). The fact that Haydn and other court musicians of his period were required to wear livery is no less a sign of their status as servant-craftsmen in the service of some noble. In both cases the patron has the final say about the composer's station in life, and there is no indication of any marked disaffection about this by the musicians involved. Such disaffection only becomes an accompaniment of the composer's life where it becomes "everyone for himself" in certain extreme forms of Urban society such as our own.

Another factor affecting the musician's status and the possibility of his vertical mobility is the musicians' association. Where it exists, it functions to maintain and/or enhance the status of its members. For example, Bukofzer says that in the Baroque (Counter Reformation) "the musicians were organized in guilds, corporations, or unions which rigidly regulated musical training, defined the rights, prerogatives, and responsibilities of their members, and saw to it that a high standard was maintained." Similar organization may be pointed out in Ancient Rome, Ancient Greece, and in our own society, among others. The significance of such associations is their introduction of certain regularized selective procedures into the process of gaining and maintaining status. In societies where social differentiation is far advanced the musical bureaucrat may become a kind of gatekeeper in this process. He thus becomes an intermediary between the musician and his patrons and audience. How this "creeping bureaucracy," begun to benefit musicians, affects the quality and quantity of the composer's music is an excellent question for future research.

A limiting case concerning the relationship between composing and social status is provided by many North American Indian tribes. In these

societies the acquisition in visions or dreams of certain songs was believed to be indispensable to success in life. Though the people involved hardly could be called composer-specialists, nevertheless they had to create new songs in order to guarantee success. Densmore says, "Such songs are connected with 'magic power.' They come to the mind of the man who has prepared himself to receive them through fasting and other acts. . . . They are believed to give power for success in war, hunting, the treatment of the sick, or other undertakings." But this apparent composer's utopia in which success depends only upon the effectiveness of one's songs is marred by the fact that men who create these songs do not conceive themselves to be composing nor think of themselves as composers.

The songs of which Densmore speaks are the most valued kind of music in these societies, and the men who create them form a kind of musical aristocracy. This is but one example of the ranking of musicians in primitive societies. Roberts, especially, has pointed out that even in those societies where everybody composes there is a recognition of differences in the quality of music made and the prestige of its composers. These examples and many others point to what appears to be a universal tendency to rank composers either according to ability or musical style; but the general status assigned composers (as opposed to other specialists) depends on the valuation of music in a society.

What about the relative ranking of the composer's and performer's role where they are differentiated? The difference in status of the two seems to be a function of the cultural distance between composer and audience. The greater this distance the lower will be the status of the composer relative to the performer. Ancient Greece just after 300 B.C. saw the composer slip in status while the performer was elevated. Then, according to Henderson, "patrons no longer wanted new music . . ., but exhibitions to applaud at the hands of a maestro." Western history from the time of the Renaissance, but particularly since the advent of the public concert hall and mass audience around 1800, provides another example of the triumph of the virtuoso. The Heifetzes and Rubinstein of our era were preceded by the Liszts and Paganinis of the nineteenth century and the *castrati* of still earlier times. Even Beethoven first conquered Vienna "by his phenomenal piano-playing and . . . improvisation." The large, comparatively uninformed audience tends to find its idols in the performer rather than the creator behind the scenes. But where the audience is more sophisticated (e.g., aristocratic patrons like Frederick the Great and his entourage), the status of the composer relative to the performer will increase.

The cultural distance between composer and audience is a function of a number of factors, all of which seem to be related to social differentiation. As this advances there are bound to be increased difficulties

in communicating between different sectors of a society. This results in an overall audience which tends to concentrate on qualities which are readily apparent such as the range of a performer's voice or the agility of his fingers. If at the same time a particular musical style is becoming more complex (which seems likely to be the case), communication between composer and audience becomes still more attenuated. Unless the composer is monopolized by a particular sector of this society, e.g., by a noble patron, the audience will not meet him on his own terms, and his status will suffer as it does in our own society. The process which leads to the specialization of the composer does not necessarily lead to his elevation.

3) *Social Relations with Significant Others* Music is a performed art; it must be performed to be socially significant. This attribute of the musical medium establishes the basic framework of the composer's relations with others. The combined activities of composing, performing, and listening which I have called the musical process are, in the simplest stage, carried on by two "specialists": composer-performer and listener. As the specialization of labor advances, the composer becomes differentiated from the performer. He is removed not only from his potential audience but also from potential performers. Now, the performer begins to carry the composer's musical "message" to the audience, and the possibility of receiving direct feedback from audience reaction is reduced. This tends to reinforce the alienation begun in the process of specialization of labor.

In our society where specialization is far advanced a maze of specialists stands between the serious composer and his audience. Musical businessmen and bureaucrats of various kinds, performers, and critics all affect the destiny of composer's work. A composer must cooperate with these people if he is to be performed at all, and in this cooperation he deals from his position of low status. The carrying of the musical "message" to the audience and its reflection back to the composer after performance by these specialists (each with his own particular needs) distorts and weakens the composer's musical idea.

This situation contrasts sharply with that of the Chopi composer who works with quite complex musical resources and a number of specialists, but who never loses direct contact with others in the musical process. In a typical instance the composer in Chopi works out his idea on a xylophone. Next he conveys the orchestral part to a group of xylophonists seated about him. Out of an intimate process of give and take the composition becomes fixed in the minds of the performers. Finally the dance leader comes to hear the work and set up the choreography to fit it. The composer in these circumstances must communicate in all stages of the preparation of his work, and he constantly receives feedback up to, and including, the actual performance. This entire process



tends to strengthen his musical idea in the minds of all and thus foster a strong community of musical experience. Tracey does not mention the audience participation and reaction in Chopi, but it is to be presumed vigorous in a society where "orchestras are to be found in every large village" and where in one district "each of the eight more important chiefs has his own . . . orchestra and dancers."

These examples support the hypothesis tentatively introduced in the preceding section that specialization in the musical process leads to difficulties in communication with patrons and audience. The ideal-typical Folk composer is not separated from his audience. For him, creation, performance, and audience reaction tend to merge. But what is carried on in the form of social interaction by the Folk composer tends to be distorted and attenuated in the life of the Urban composer-specialist. His "internal dialogue" is not strengthened and elaborated in the musical process; he is, rather, left—often severely—alone, which tends to further his individualism, or even autism. The Ivory Tower composer of our time is an example.

If the term patron is taken to mean a person who supports or advocates an artist, the composer in the simpler musical societies may have rather broad patronage. For example, among the Ila and Thonga of southeastern Africa a number of women composers provide many women clients of the tribe with *Impango* songs to be sung at social gatherings. But when wealth and/or expertise concerning a particular musical style become concentrated in the hands of a few the term patron refers to a musical elite. Where this occurs the destiny of the composer is bound up in the favor of this elite.

In America today the principal patrons of serious music are the wealthy. Recently, patronage by this group has extended into the field of jazz as well. In modern Russia the state has become the principal patron. In western history, as mentioned previously, the town, the court, and the church were patrons at one time or another. These oldtime patrons as a rule ordered music for specific occasions, and, according to Hauser, "it probably occurred to composers but rarely to compose on their own responsibility without a commission."

In any social relationship the extent of constraint exercised by one person on the other presents a difficult and fascinating problem. In the relationship between composer and patron, I mentioned above that the patron was an important factor in determining the status of the composer and, most probably, his style of life. Now since music is central to the relationship between the two, it seems reasonable to suggest that the patron influences the composer's music as well, although the extent of such constraint, the manner in which it operates, and the composer's experience of, and reaction to, it are difficult to prove with the data at hand. What the data do show is that the composer has more or less lee-

way in musical matters above and beyond the cultural ground swell of musical style which carries both composer and patron along with it. A variety of specific instances may be cited. A composer may be directed to compose music for a specific occasion such as a feast, e.g., Siuai. He may be required to fill in a musical outline provided by a patron, e.g., *Impango* songs among the Ila and Thonga. His task may be to create music to go with specific literary content, e.g., "historical" songs in Dahomey. He may undertake to compose within the host of limitations posed by a movie and its makers in Hollywood.

That the patron generally is very powerful does not mean necessarily that he will exercise a greater degree of control over the composer's music. In the courts of traditional India, for example, great power and wealth were concentrated, yet Indian court composers sometimes were most independent spirits. The independence of our own Ivory Tower composers is achieved not so much because of patronage, but for lack of it. All of this suggests that the composer's freedom of musical expression (in relation to the patron) depends on the relative status of the two as well as the patron's musical expertise.

Indirect constraints on the specific kind of music a composer turns out may be exercised by specialists who control performances. In our society there are conductors (who occasionally dictate taste to less sophisticated patrons), instrumentalists (who, like conductors, tend to favor Romantic music), musical businessmen (who are notoriously conservative in their musical demands), and critics (who, according to American composers, tend to deal harshly with their music). All of these specialists have attained power over the composer and his music because of role specialization in the musical process and the growing gap in musical taste and sophistication between composer and audience, i.e., social and cultural differentiation in the musical process. These people, by blocking or facilitating the contacts which must be made by the composer and by controlling the music which finally is performed, may force some of the more adaptable composers to accept their terms and others not so adaptable to give up. The modern composer tends to be harassed or frustrated from all sides. In simpler societies, on the other hand, the composer-performer is called to account by patrons and/or audience only. Though the response to his music may be unfavorable, it will be more immediate and direct. He lives, as a result, in a continuous and vital musical world in which composing, performing, and audience response tend to merge. What the modern composer gains by technological supremacy may be taken away in the breakup of his musical process.

Who is a significant other to one composer may not be to another, especially in societies where free souls abound. But each society has its musical requirements, and its musical agents see that its musical traditions are not seriously violated—or if violated, not successfully. The composer

who essays such a violation has his work cut out for him. For example, the Ivory Tower composer in our society must construct his edifice on a foundation provided by some other job—usually teaching. His independence, thus, is “bought” by role versatility. The Commercial composer meets the society’s requirements more directly. In writing for movies, television, chorus, band, and other media that sell readily he tends to concern himself very much with what others want.

For a composer’s music to be socially significant it must carry some meaning to an audience. If communication of this meaning is to approach perfection the same set of musical conventions must prevail throughout the musical process. Whether these conventions are dictated by the composer or others is beside the point as far as the successful functioning of the musical process is concerned. In some cases successful communication, i.e., the full artistic act, may be accomplished posthumously—a composer finding favor with audiences of succeeding generations. Or the composer may only be appreciated away from home. Thus we are led to conceive of the composer’s role in historical and cross-cultural perspective. The modern Ivory Tower who thinks that he may achieve fame out of his world trades on the presently existing fame of those who have gone before him. He gains some social recognition because he follows in their footsteps even as the disciples of Indian *Ustads* partake of the brilliance of their masters.

But writing of *Zukunftsmusik* by the independent-minded is an isolated phenomenon as far as the entire range of human society is concerned. The vast majority of composers have written for their own times composing the framework of musical conventions which united them with living others in the musical process. In pre-literate societies one reason for this is obvious. Where music is not recorded, one cannot create for the future—if, indeed, he wants to—without creating for the present. If one’s contemporaries do not understand or like one’s music there is little chance for it to become a part of the culture.

#### C. TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE ROLE OF THE COMPOSER

1) *Nature of the Compositional Process* Nettl has pointed out that the ideas of pre-literate peoples range (where composition is concerned) between the conceptions of craft and inspiration. In the West the craft concept prevailed in pre-Romantic times. The idea of inspiration has been with us since then. A number of modern American composers conceive the compositional process to be a mixture of the two, i.e., the more or less mysterious inspiration and the mostly conscious craft. This is how one American composer described his work:

“See, there are two kinds of creativity. One is having this slender thing—the seed, the germ, the thing which you can’t look for. It has to come to you. The other is an intellectual creativity which requires in-

tense concentration and sustained hours and hours of work. If you don't have both of them you can't put it over."

Composers "in process" show a wide range of feeling states. For example, one of Rasmussen's Eskimo informants says:

"All songs come to man when he is alone in the great solitude. They come to him in the wake of tears, of tears that spring from the deep recesses of the heart, or they come to him suddenly accompanied by joy and laughter."

On the other hand, an American composer who spoke about the process of composition said:

"There's a feeling of normal excitement with it." The data at hand suggest that the greater the affect which accompanies composition the more likely is the idea of inspiration to prevail. The association of these two factors may prove to be a key to the local view of music, e.g., whether it is a form of affective expression, and this in turn may prove to be an important introduction to the psychology of a people.

In the western world the composition of serious music has tended to be a solitary act. The image of the solitary composer undoubtedly received considerable impetus from the individualist-subjectivist values of the Romantic period, but the advent of written musical notation and the specialization of labor in the musical process also were contributing factors. The result: the modern composer has his solitude, but the musical process lies in ruins about him. This situation stands in stark contrast to that of the Chopi composer mentioned above. In those pre-literate societies where the composer as a specialist begins to be recognizable (as in Chopi) composition is much more of a collective enterprise. This tends to reinforce the community of musical experience within the musical process and make it hang together. In this way the Folk condition may be retained despite considerable social differentiation. Solitude under such conditions might lead to the destruction of all that.

The art of composition differs from some of the other creative arts in that it usually requires performance and technical apparatus if it is to be socially significant. For the composer's musical idea to be actualized, sound must be produced by a person or persons performing on wind instruments (including the human voice), string instruments, and percussion instruments. The kind of instruments and the limitations of performing talent establish the framework of the composer's musical ideas even as a discursive language system sets up limits for the literary artist. The Ojibwa composer, for example, composes in a sound world circumscribed by voice and drum. By way of extreme contrast, the modern composer of electronic music has available to him the remarkable gamut of sounds made by his performer-machine.

In the simplest condition of the musical process the sounds which the composer can make most likely will be limited by his ability as an

instrument maker and/or performer. Nearly all Andaman men, according to Radcliffe-Brown, compose and sing their own songs. "No one would ever sing (at a dance) a song composed by another person." The Siuai composer who has been commissioned to create music for a feast constructs a special pan pipe to be copied by a host's associates for performance. The composer's sound world in such societies tends to be as simple as the musical process.

As the level of instrument technology increases and specialist instrument-makers appear the composer is likely to be offered a more complex sound world to work with. The advent of specialist-performers of varied talents adds to the richness of his musical material at the price of multiplying relationships with necessary others in the process of music making. The hypothesis is that there is in general an association between the complexity of the composer's sound world and the complexity of the musical process.

In an extreme example of the trend just mentioned—modern opera—the composer finds himself collaborating not only with all of the specialists cited above, but with librettists, choreographers, scenery and costume designers, and the many other dramatic specialists necessary to the performance. The resources available to him may be enormous, but the small army of collaborators *must violate* the composer's original conception by the time of performance. Of course, what is a *violation* in our society still laden with subjectivist individualist values might not be to the Folk composer who is more accustomed, perhaps, to the idea of music as a collective product. The period from the end of the composer's solitary work on a piece of music to its performance often is very trying—and galling—to the American composer. A similar situation exists in modern American drama, according to William Gibson, whose *Two for the See-Saw* turned out to be a far cry from his original idea after all the specialists in the dramatic process finally brought it to performance. The artistic process of performed arts in modern society is such that it constantly threatens the integrity of the composer's original conception. In the Folk condition it is not so much a threatening, as a completing, agency.

2) *Styles* Many schemes have been used to classify musical style. These range from systems based on purely musical factors to those which consider one or more extra-musical factors. Recently, Alan Lomax has argued that "the study of musical style should embrace the total human situation which produces the music." His exploratory formulation opens up a truly formidable array of possible classification. There will be no attempt to exhaust these possibilities here, but only those which bear more or less directly on western musical idols concerning the composer's work.

a. The Conception of "Art for Art's Sake." The idea of "Art for Art's Sake" implies an aesthetic conception which did not exist in the West until the late eighteenth century. Before that, according to Einstein, "there was scarcely any music that was not utilitarian *Gebrauchsmusik*, or that which would not have served an immediate purpose. . . ." Generally in primitive societies music tends to be made for non-aesthetic, rather than aesthetic, reasons. Nettl points out that the concept of music as "beautiful" hardly exists. The Navaho, for example, asks, "What is it for?" not "How does it sound?" What is desired in the most valued form of Navaho music is an effort, primarily magical.

The revelation that the artist is not necessarily bent on aesthetic ends rules out the concept of "Art for Art's Sake" in some societies. It also poses problems of cross-cultural investigation. To imply that the artist is seeking to create an aesthetic product above all may be to project our own view into him. A musical composition may be a work of art by our standards, but the motivations or considerations which produced it can be very different from those which have been given labels such as "aesthetic need" or "instinct for craftsmanship." Many of the subjects of this study are artists by our definition, not theirs.

How are social factors connected with the idea of "Art for Art's Sake"? The stripping away of non-aesthetic considerations and the elevation of the aesthetic appears to derive particularly from a specialization of labor in which what were once means become transformed into ends. This, proceeding hand in hand with the fragmentation or compartmentalization of life, has resulted in the purely musical activities exemplified by the modern concert hall and the narrowing down of the composer's competence and influence to the strictly musical or artistic.

Though some may argue that art produced under the aegis of the idea of "Art for Art's Sake" is the only truly great art, such an hypothesis is open to serious doubt. Putting aside the problem of the cross-cultural criteria to be used (a considerable problem), Seeger maintains that it is impossible to rate the quality of music on the basis of the number and kind of extra-musical considerations which go into its composition. In the western world Bach stands out even though he wrote much *Gebrauchsmusik*. The primitive world with all of its non-aesthetic considerations has produced artists of considerable stature according to Radin. It may be legitimate to conclude that more complex art has been created where the idea of "Art for Art's Sake" prevails, but that it is superior aesthetically remains to be proved.

b. The Idea of Art (Music) as Innovation. Westerners are likely to associate the greatness of a musical work with the degree of innovation it contains. Such a viewpoint, though it existed earlier, was given especial impetus in the Romantic period when, according to Hauser, every new work of art became "the expression not only of a new idea

but also of a new phase in the artist's development." It is not difficult to find societies which go to the opposite extreme, i.e., conservatism. In Navaho, for example, "the valuable or potent song is one that is remembered letter-perfect; a song that is 'just made up' has no value in traditional Navaho religion." The music maker there tends to be a ritualistic performer, not a composer.

From the Navaho example it is tempting to jump to the conclusion that religious practitioners who use music tend to be performers (non innovators) rather than composers. Indeed, the generalization is made by Sachs that religious music tends to be conservative. But religious music does change, and numerous religious composers may be discerned. In the early Christian church members of the religious elite often composed hymns. In the Marquesas, the *tuhuna o'ono* "was at once tribal ceremonial priest and bard (i.e., composer)." Some Indian saints have been composers. The dream-inspired songs which were so highly valued among the North American Indians were of a religious character; their recipients in fact were composer-performers. Though religious music *may* prove to be more conservative than other styles in a culture, innovation is by no means ruled out.

The emphasis placed on innovation or conservatism in a society suggests what kind of personality type is valued there. Our view is that the composer of serious or art music ought to be in constant self-development through his art. This suggests that "Being in Becoming" (to use Florence Kluckhohn's term) is the valued condition of personality in society. It does not appear to be the "dominant value orientation," however, but a "variant value orientation." The prevailing stress in our society has been on "Doing," and for the composers whose ideal is "Being in Becoming" the inconsistency constitutes one other factor contributing to their alienation from others in the musical process. The composer who pursues his individual muse in our society (to the exclusion of other considerations) must progressively divorce himself from other composers and from the mass audience. As a result, because neither the musical elite nor the masses have been particularly eager to follow him, the composer's musical innovation and self-development neither originates, nor helps him to adjust to, social change.

The process of differentiation of musical styles which is so apparent in our culture may, where whole groups are involved, lead to the differentiation—and perhaps alienation—of groups. The music of Haydn, for example, probably contributed some little bit to social stratification in the eighteenth century Germany. In our own society the jazz world has until recently tended to divorce and insulate its devotees from the main stream of American life. These illustrations may be contrasted with the Balinese scene where, despite considerable social stratification, musical cleavages have not developed. Though it is belaboring the obvious to

point out that music may perform both an integrative and a divisive function, much more study of cases such as these will be required before it is possible to draft a comprehensive statement about the articulation of music with social structure in Man's world. It is not too early to suggest an hypothesis about individualism in art, however. Where this is carried to an extreme as in our society, it not only leads to the alienation of the artist from a significant audience, but (for the composer) to a decline in technical expertise and an increased difficulty in achieving a musical identity. The composer must hear his music performed if he is to become competent; but where individualism prevails, the opportunities for him to hear his work are slight. Finally, if there is no stable audience whose live judgments and responses provide an anchor to his creative leaps of imagination, it will be very difficult for him to achieve a point of view; and it is the lack of a point of view which draws some of the major criticism of the modern composer.

c. The Idea of Serious (or Art) vs. Popular Music. The potential range of musical expression in any society is defined by its gene pool and by its socio-cultural character. The interplay of these two factors may result in a wide or narrow range of musical expression, but never total homogeneity. Just as no society has ever managed to erase individual personality differences, so the elimination of variation in musical styles has not come to pass. Even in simpler societies like Uvea and Futuna, for example, Burrows discerned stylistic differences in the songs made by native composers.

Not only is stylistic variation the rule, but the ranking of different styles often is encountered. Thus, in McAllester's study of the Navaho "secular" songs are reported to rank lower than "sacred." But though many societies appear to rank their musical styles, it is unusual to find such a ranking correlated with the number of people who are committed to them. Our own society provides an illustration of such a correlation. Art, or serious, music (high rank) has come to mean "for the few" and popular music (low rank) "for the many." Carried to an extreme, the distinction may revolve around "music which I alone appreciate" and "music which all others appreciate," though our drive toward uniqueness has not yet brought this condition about.

It is interesting to follow the development of the distinction between serious and popular music in the West. Hauser may have put his finger on a beginning when he describes the differentiation between the wandering minstrel and salaried court poet of the late Middle Ages. The former, he says, "lose the custom of the upper classes and address themselves . . . to a lower class of public," while the poets "in deliberate contrast develop into real men of letters, with all the petty vanities and all the pride of later humanists." This distinction between musicians was associated with a differentiation and ranking of styles of music. It was



court music which received the higher prestige of its patrons, and it is this music which constitutes the major source of our serious or art music of today.

The leisure of the aristocracy, the specialization of their musicians, the musical resources available, and the over-all musical sophistication of the court tended to further musical development within the framework of a cohesive musical process. Aristocratic or court music became the most highly valued and inaccessible music in society. The classes and institutions which cultivated this music, by immersing themselves in its non-utilitarian aspects, fostered the development of a code of beauty which was to be used by later generations of "distinction seekers" who have since pre-empted such esoterica as pre-Classic music, folk music, jazz, and the music of the primitives.

Until the Romantic period it was possible for the court composer to produce nothing but serious music as a means of livelihood, but the advent of the modern concert hall and mass audience made his career subject to the whims of a broader, but decreasingly sophisticated public. As irrepressible social forces brought about an increasing alienation of the composer from the world in which he lived, it became clear that "good," i.e., serious, music would not necessarily be popular music. The recognition of this fact and the necessity of earning a living caused Schubert to begin to distinguish "between works that he had written for himself, his circle of friends, and serious music lovers, and those that he had written for 'success.'"

In modern American society the distinction between serious and popular music has become a fact of big business. Most of the serious composers I interviewed were aware of the distinction and held popular music to be inferior, but some felt that from the point of view of musical composition no distinction should be drawn. Almost all of those who favored the latter view are Commercial composers, i.e., composers who tend to write in media for which there is a ready market. These composers, who generally are taken to be serious composers, border on the realm of popular musical composition and arranging. Some of them, uneasy about this, attempt to rationalize by reference to Bach and other composers of *Gebrauchsmusik*. They appear to realize that they are doing what the popular composer more avowedly does—striving for a broad appeal. They become, therefore, agents of the commercialization and democratization of what was once unambiguously defined as aristocratic music. Meanwhile, their more intractable colleagues, shoring up their individual Ivory Towers against the contagion of popularity, remove themselves still further from any significant audience.

The fact of social differentiation in a musical process pervaded by a market economy makes it very unlikely that a serious composer will be

able to write what is at once a great work (by his standards) and a popular or commercial work. These are the facts of life with which he must live. But they are by no means universal facts of life. It has been the general rule in most primitive societies for composer and audience to be united by the same set of musical conventions. Under these circumstances a good composer is likely to be a popular composer. This is true even where specialization is present, and it is made possible, according to Merriam, because "relatively large numbers of people within a non-literate society are competent in the arts, and aesthetic activities are closely related to the whole functioning culture." The impact of western culture on such societies undoubtedly will cause a break-down in their musical processes. It is imperative that scholars note if, and when, the distinction between serious and popular music appears. In so doing they will be able to validate the hypothesis given above which was developed from western data only.

## 2. *The Social Functions of the Composer's Role*

The social ends or functions for which the composer makes music are easy to discern in the writings of anthropologists, many of whom, if not avowed functionalists, turn out to be such in their classifications of native music. For the avowedly functional, Radcliffe-Brown's comment on the Andaman dance (with music) may be taken as a prototype:

"... the dance produces a condition in which the unity, harmony and concord of the community are at a maximum, and in which they are intensely felt by every member. It is to produce this condition . . . that is the primary social function of the dance. The well-being, or indeed the existence, of the society depends on the unity and harmony that obtain in it, and the dance, by making the unity intensely felt, is a means of maintaining it. For the dance affords an opportunity for the direct action of the community on the individual, and we have seen that it exercises in the individual those sentiments by which the social harmony is maintained." The prerequisite for the continued existence of a society here is seen to depend on a rather vague condition of "unity, harmony, and concord." No list of definite and specific prerequisites for survival of a society are given by Radcliffe-Brown.

Recently, Aberle and his colleagues have made a significant contribution to functional theory with "The Functional Prerequisites of a Society." Their list, which derives from their definition of a society as a "self-sufficient system of action" will provide the framework of my analysis. The concepts of manifest and latent function, non-function, dysfunction, and function so well elucidated by Merton also will pervade this attempt to explain teleologically the existence of one social fact, i.e.,

the composer's role. By enumerating the functional prerequisites and checking to see if, and how, music meets these ends, the range of the social functions of the composer's role will be described, and therefore, the "reason(s)" for its existence. While following my argument the reader should keep in mind that a single piece of music may have more than one function and therefore more than one "reason" for being created.

The list of functional prerequisites proposed by Aberle and his colleagues follows. I have combined some of them in order to facilitate analysis. No attempt will be made to cite the societies in which the specific functions are performed. Such citations could not be exhaustive; they probably would be superfluous.

#### A. PROVISION FOR ADEQUATE RELATIONSHIP TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND FOR SEXUAL RECRUITMENT

This prerequisite refers to: (1) the adaptation of a society to other societies, (2) the natural environment, and (3) the "patterning of heterosexual relationships to insure opportunities and motivation for a sufficient rate of reproduction." The composer has produced various kinds of music to meet this prerequisite:

(1) Music for war and for inter-societal gifts and trade.

(2) Music to accompany the procurement of food and natural resources and preparing them for use.

(3) Music for courtship and marriage.

Some of this music (and the music which meets the other prerequisites) may be of a magical or religious nature. However, such music may be dysfunctional, or the true function may be latent. For example, magical music may promote confidence in the hunt and thus increase the food supply, but it may prove to be dysfunctional in the face of a natural catastrophe such as a typhoon. All the confidence in the world will not alter the typhoon's course nor diminish its intensity.

#### B. ROLE DIFFERENTIATION AND ROLE ASSIGNMENT (INCLUDING STATUS DIFFERENTIATION)

The composer may create music of a specific kind for persons occupying a particular position in a society. His music, therefore, contributes to "the systematic and stable division of activities" which must exist if the society is to continue as a going concern. Specific kinds of music have been linked to sex roles, age roles or grades, work roles, ethnic groups or social strata, and specific status positions (e.g., king). As I indicated above, the variety of musical styles in a culture may be both an indication of, and a contribution to, social differentiation. The dysfunctional extreme occurs when (as in our society) the specialist composer begins to compose music that belongs to him alone.

## C. COMMUNICATION

The basic social function of music (and all other extrinsic symbol systems) is communication. The break-down of such communication and the musical process (as in our society) serves to indicate that the role of composer has become peripheral, dispensable, and destined for near-oblivion. If communication does not occur almost none of the other functional prerequisites will be met, and the "reasons" for the continued existence of the specialist-composer will be reduced to the minimum.

Of course, in human society music is only one of several means of communication; it may be a more or less important means depending on the orientation of a particular culture. From the point of view of our techno-scientific culture in which discursive symbol systems prevail it is difficult to conceive of examples in which non-discursive symbol systems are the necessary—and even preferred—mode. Yet one finds many situations in which communication cannot occur without music. One of these is the area of religion. What is it about music which makes it so suitable for religious purposes? I believe that it is music's significant contribution to that necessary element of religion—ritual—which accounts for its widespread use. Without the element of rhythm it is difficult to conceive how ritual could exist, and the introduction of rhythm into a spoken text provides the germ of the musical in such ritual.

Music occasionally permits a "message" to be conveyed when the use of language alone would be dangerous to one or more of the parties involved. The songs of ridicule and satire in Dahomey and songs of Bashi (Congo) girls expressing their grievances to a powerful employer are examples which support the idea that "Music hath charm . . ." However, music not only is used to soothe what would otherwise be ruffled feelings, but to stir them up. A group state of religious or warlike frenzy sometimes is developed with the aid of musical communication. Without music in either of these situations, the communication of meaning and/or emotion would be blocked or curtailed. What is it that music puts into such communication that language could not? Following Cassirer, I suggest that it provides communication in "depth," i.e., depth of experience rather than the attributes of experience.

Any symbolic act may be derived from one or more symbol systems. Our western tendency to compartmentalize such systems does violence to reality in many societies where the creative act does not take place in pieces—one symbol system at a time—but as a whole. To differentiate one kind of symbol from another in the communicative act and assign primacy to one or another frequently is to violate the local world view. The gong languages of Africa provide a particularly frustrating example to the western compartmentalizer. Are they language, music,

or both? They include variations in tone and set rhythms, yet they are based on a spoken language. Herskovits and Herskovits provide another example of the difficulty of separating two symbol systems out of a single symbolic act. In Dahomey genealogies cannot simply be recited. They must be sung.

I do not want to maintain that separation of symbol systems cannot be maintained for purposes of research, but I wish to emphasize that the categories we use are based on a model provided by western culture. We tend to think of the arts as separate muses and distinguish them from language, science and religion. These categories are social facts which are a product of considerable social differentiation. The development of such categories reflects the specialization of labor in which each muse has her followers, and the scientists and men of religion follow different avenues. In such societies a multi-symbolic "message" requires the collaboration of various specialists. The more specialized these people are the greater will be their problems of communication among themselves and, as a consequence, with the audience. The specialization of collaborating artists appears, therefore, to be one additional reason for the break-down of the musical process in societies like ours.

#### D. SHARED COGNITIVE ORIENTATIONS

#### E. REGULATION OF AFFECTIVE EXPRESSION

I have combined these two prerequisites as a means of seconding Meyer's convincing argument about the effects of music. He says: "Whether a piece of music gives rise to affective experience (emotion) or intellectual experience (meaning) depends on the disposition and training of the listener." It probably is fair to say then that groups or societies (because they have similar dispositions and training) will tend to react to a piece of music in similar fashion. Though music is neither emotional nor meaningful in itself, it still is possible to make some generalizations about music's relation to the two realms of experience and the two prerequisites indicated above.

1) *Cognitive* The essentials of one's cognitive orientation are provided by the organization of experience and consequent location of self in time, space, and the world of objects (particularly persons). Self-orientation is necessary in order to exist and act in the world; music as one kind of symbol system contributes to the structuring of experience and the consequent location and realization of self.

Langer refers to music as "virtual time." It is easy to see music's contribution to this dimension of world view. In every society the procession of events is organized rhythmically, i.e., there are some kind of agreed-upon repetitive units such as the year, the seasons, the day, and still smaller units. Specific musical rhythms will tend to cause participants to break up their on-going experience in line with these rhythms.

A waltz may cause people to think in threes, a march in twos. In work songs music establishes the pattern of work, i.e., fast-slow, hard-easy, work-rest. Rhythm is not the only element of music which functions in this way. A melodic line also provides a time unit of sorts.

According to Langer time has volume, i.e., the length, breadth, and depth of experience. Music contributes to the organization of this volume not only by means of rhythm and the length of melodies, but also by means of harmony, counterpoint, and tone color. Where polyphony prevails the listener identifies with multiple notes or lines, and in so doing he organizes his experience "vertically" in terms of pitch. Finally, the element of tone color gives "body" to the individual's volume of time.

Since music is a performed art, orientation in the interpersonal sphere is required of its participants. Ensemble music, particularly requires extensive interpersonal commitments. The individual must take the role of many others in order to comprehend a piece of music in its entirety. When all goes well such an ensemble provides a model of harmonious social relations which may (as indicated by Radcliffe-Brown above) function to promote the unity of a society. In the process of music-making, then, some kind of self-other distinction is demanded. To what degree the individual's set arising from this distinction will be associative or dissociative will depend on the particular musical process involved. As I showed earlier, there have been powerful dissociative tendencies established in western serious composers since the Romantic period. Nevertheless, since some collaboration is required for performance, the orientation of most of these does not become completely autistic and dissociative.

It is impossible to go into the variety of specific meanings and the means by which they are conveyed through music in this paper. Each culture has its own musical "language," and the scholar cannot assume any universal and necessary link between musical symbols and the concepts and realities which they represent. Unless the composer and others in the musical process share the same general sound-meanings, however, a musical work may prove to be non-functional or dysfunctional.

2) *Affective Expression* Those of us who have suffered through Rock and Roll and its various hero-practitioners are well aware of music's use as a socially acceptable (?) emotional outlet. Though we are fairly sure about the nature of the emotion being expressed in this and many other cases, it isn't easy to prove the relationship between the elements of music and specific emotions. There are three kinds of questions the answers to which will provide proof: (1) How do those using the music say they feel? (2) How do they appear to feel? (3) Is music used in situations which appear to call for emotion?

In the discussion of the compositional process I cited reports which

indicated that the emotional accompaniment to musical composition (both degree and kind) varies from person to person. Leonard Meyer's view which was quoted just above suggests that this applies to listeners too. What may be said for individuals probably applies to societies and groups as well. Max Weber made a notable attempt to show that the development of rationality in modern western culture (as opposed to emotionality) was reflected in its music. His trend of thought, if not his specific argument, is similar to that of Hauser who points out the development of the desire to write, paint, and compose from the intellect in the twentieth century. The range in song style from south to north in both Italy and Spain seems, according to Alan Lomax, to reflect a gradient of sexual agony. The emotional outlet provided by jazz in our society is seen by Margolis to be similar for social elements in protest, e.g., minority groups, intellectuals, adolescents. Whether or not these authors have proved their cases is not, I believe, so important in this stage of our research as their hypotheses concerning the emotional bases of certain kinds of music and the relation of all this to social and cultural contexts, i.e., situations which call for emotion (or the lack of it) in music.

Some of the more specific occasions which have required emotional expression through music are:

- a. Deaths, departures, and other misfortunes.
- b. Rivalry and conflict.
- c. Situations requiring or permitting sex and love.
- d. Religious occasions.

Because in many societies such occasions clearly call for specific emotions to be expressed in music, the scholar has little difficulty uncovering the emotional content of the music. The task is more difficult for the realm of serious music in our society where the concert hall has tended to separate music from everyday life and occasions. What emotion does the occasion of a symphony concert call for in the audience? A whole galaxy of emotions awaits the concert-goer, but the situation in which he finds himself is neutral, i.e., the situation does not do much to tip him off in advance whether the composer is expressing emotions, and if so, what they are. This and other similar situations in our society, e.g., listening to recorded music, are further reasons for the breakdown of communication in the musical process.

#### F. A SHARED ARTICULATED SET OF GOALS

In present-day Russia, according to one report, composers are expected to serve Russian humanistic aims through their music. One reason for the existence of the composer in Russian society, therefore, is the recognized contribution which he can make toward defining what

should be done in that society. That music may contribute to the definition of a society's goals is not unusual in Man's world. What is unusual is the recognition and rational employment of this knowledge in the service of society. The Dahomey composer of songs "which glorify the names and deeds of dead kings and living chiefs" performs the same kind of service for his own society as does the Russian, but an awareness of the full nature of his contribution to its survival is lacking.

Where music with text is concerned it is comparatively easy to discern what functional prerequisite is being met. Thus songs containing lessons or proverbs and magical or religious songs which are sung to bring about some desirable condition obviously may define individual, group, or societal goals. But if music without text or allied arts is considered it is more difficult to discover if a particular function is being performed. In regard to goal setting, music may have a particular facility for holding up to people a general style of life (real or desirable). In the elegant and refined forms used by Haydn, Mozart, and their colleagues one (if properly oriented) may be able to grasp the quintessence of aristocratic life-goals. The starkly simple Gregorian Chant seems, on the other hand, to establish goals for the ideal Christian. The Church's earlier sanctions against deviation from this form attests to its belief that such music is indispensable to a particular life-style.

Not only may the composer help to set the goals of this society, but the society may set goals for him. With advancing social differentiation in the musical process and the consequent alienation of the composer any reciprocity of this kind will tend to break down and the composer will be left more and more alone to chart his musical way. In our society some extraordinary individuals (Ivory Towers) are capable of using such a situation to their own advantage, but for others the result may mean musical chaos. In either case the composer, by not contributing to this and other prerequisites, will find himself receiving less and less social support.

#### G. THE NORMATIVE REGULATION OF MEANS

This prerequisite, according to Aberle and his associates, tells how the goals of a society may be won. Music may make a contribution to this end in two ways: (1) It may constitute the prescribed means to achieve a goal. (2) It may tell how a goal ought to be achieved. Many magical and religious songs provide examples of the former. Songs of North American Indians related to the Vision Quest are particularly good illustrations. The competitive songs or narratives of Dahomean hunters who seek to be chief of the hunt is a good example of the latter. This occasion in Dahomey is in fact a forum in which music is used to define how to achieve success in the hunt. Many other illustrations could be provided here, but they would be superfluous. In general, the



discussion of music's function in the service of goals is applicable to this prerequisite also.

#### H. SOCIALIZATION

For Aberle and his colleagues "socialization includes both the development of new adult members from infants and the induction of an individual of any age into any role of the society or its sub-systems where new learning is required." The following kinds of music pertain to this prerequisite.

- 1) Lullabies, children's music, music belonging to age-grades.
- 2) Music associated with rites of passage, formal and informal initiations.

Of course, in societies where there is not a great degree of segmentation children and adults will be exposed to much music which is not specifically aimed at their socialization. Such occasions may help people to learn about their culture and thus serve a socializing function. There has developed in our society much specialized music of a socializing nature, e.g., children's records, concerts. The mass media, on the other hand, by being available to all, tend to obliterate specialties and present a broadly acceptable version of the total culture. It may be that the music which the child hears by twirling the television or radio dial is more important to his socialization than is the specialized music which aims to teach him something.

How are composers themselves socialized? I considered this problem fairly extensively in the section on composer recruitment, but one additional hypothesis will be presented here. Eminent American composers of serious music were discovered to have had factors in their backgrounds which "encouraged the development of the personal autonomy which later would be necessary to deal with an hostile or indifferent world." Such a course of socialization could not prevail in a society where the musical process is intact and where a solid community of musical experience exists. In such a society the socialization of the composer probably would tend to be more in line with his fellows (rather than away from them).

#### 1. THE EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF DISRUPTIVE FORMS OF BEHAVIOR

Adequate socialization is one way of dealing with disruptive behavior. It nips it in the bud. Still, even the most adequately socialized individual may threaten the established social pattern at one time or another. Music may play a part to keep these and other people in line.

One means of musical social control is to permit the expression of an otherwise dangerous impulse in the comparatively harmless area of music. Songs of insult and ridicule, presumably, take the place of overt aggression between members of a society. The troubadour or serenader

"pours out" his love in a situation where sexual satisfaction is delayed or permanently suppressed. This may tend to prevent the indiscriminate raping of females and killing of rivals. Bewailing the departure of dead or living may prevent an individual from going awry under emotional stress. Music which accompanies popular merrymaking of various kinds, e.g., carnivals, seems to provide a culturally sanctioned outlet for impulses which may function to enable people to "put up with" the everyday system of controls.

Just as music may play a role in defining acceptable behavior, so it also may point out what is unacceptable. By holding up in public a certain kind of behavior and establishing through music or accompanying text the nature and magnitude of the transgression, a musician becomes an agent of social control. The Uven and Futunan songs which ridicule evildoers (particularly sex offenders) provide excellent illustrations of this.

Finally the role of composer itself may function to salvage personalities who otherwise might be consumed by mental illness (i.e., disruptive behavior). I noted above in the section on recruitment that American serious composers are prone to mental illness and that pathology occasionally marks composers in other societies. In these situations the composer's role (and others like it) puts society's stamp of approval (reluctantly or enthusiastically) on the musical manifestation of neurotic or psychotic symptoms and thus prevents more damaging manifestations in individual and society.

In complex societies it is essential to define the social unit for which a function is being performed since what is functional for a sub-group may not turn out to be functional for the society. To weigh the balance in any particular instance requires considerable virtuosity in functional analysis. Jazz in our society presents such a problem. The black jazz musician who takes dope, whores around, and generally violates middle-class norms may have achieved the very best possible adjustment for a person born in his social station, but what is he contributing to the continuity and survival of the society as a whole? Here, the contribution which jazz makes to socially disruptive behavior (from the middle-class point of view) must be weighed against the very definite functions it serves for its devotees.

It should not be inferred from the above that no other cultural element can meet the functional prerequisite. There may or may not be functional alternatives to music and to the composer in any given society. What cultural element constitutes a functional equivalent to music under specified conditions should be a fruitful problem for continuing research. The problem of functional alternatives, the knowledge that music may be functional, dysfunctional, or non-functional, and the

question of the social unit served by the composer and his music make it mandatory that comparative studies using systems for assessing functions in degree and kind be undertaken. Judging from the past reticence of anthropologists about the social and psychological aspects of art, we still are a long way from being out of the woods in this regard.

### *3. Summary and Conclusion*

In this paper I sought to open up a cross-cultural approach to the social and psychological aspects of the creative end of the musical process, i.e., the role of the composer. In my analysis I conceived of the entire process of composing, performing, and listening as a social fact, i.e., a more or less integrated system of social action. The composer's role often does not exist as a recognizable social unit, but the act of composing (and therefore at least the beginnings of the role) exist in all (?) societies. The emergence of the composer's role was seen in terms of social differentiation in the musical process, and some of the consequences for the composer and his music were suggested. Though there is no intent to suggest a unilinear evolutionary sequence which applies to all societies, it does seem reasonable to maintain that the course of social development in general is from the simple to the complex (e.g., Folk to Urban). The corresponding development of the musical process is from low specialization to high and from strong community of musical experience to weak. The composer in the latter situation is faced with a situation which is inimical to the communication of his most profound musical ideas.

The existence of the composer's role was explained in terms of the functional prerequisites of a society. Thus, the existence of the composer and his music is seen to be dependent upon non-musical factors. Cannot music, then, be explained in terms of itself? I think that though it is possible under certain conditions to differentiate a musical or aesthetic need in a person or society, it is precisely these conditions which signal the breakdown of the musical process, the alienation of the composer, and the deleterious consequences for music which have been stressed in this paper. The chances are greater that when music's utilitarian functions decline, so will the reasons for the existence of the composer. If this is true, the general course of development in the musical process leads first to the emergence of the serious composer as a specialist and then to his expendability. It will be interesting to watch the Russian effort to turn back the clock.

# 46 The Purposes of Ethnomusicology: An Anthropological View<sup>1</sup>



Alan P. Merriam

ALTHOUGH DENNISON NASH HAD MUCH TO SAY ABOUT MUSIC (II:45) HIS concentration was upon the social role of composer. *Ethnomusicology* is more than the sociology of musicians, even more than the analysis of the social role of music. It includes comparative and historical research into music itself and goes beyond this too. Alan Merriam describes his view of the past, present and hopeful future of ethnomusicology, spelling out some of the things he considers valid and fruitful, but also reacting sharply to things he believes sterile or erroneous.

I suppose that no one of us here this morning would care to call himself a full-fledged student of the history of science—certainly not I—and if this be true, it is also a pity. For this particular session of the

<sup>1</sup>This paper was presented in a Plenary Session of the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, held at Indiana University, November 29–December 2, 1962. As such, it received considerable comment and discussion, some of which would certainly have been incorporated in the paper had a major rewriting been apropos. However, since some, at least, of this discussion accompanies publication, it has seemed proper to leave the paper in virtually its exact original form. I should like to note particularly that the labels attached to the various approaches taken by my friends and colleagues were given in a humorous vein; I should not like to see them taken seriously.

SOURCE: *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 7 (1963), pp. 206–213. Reprinted with the permission of the author and the Society for Ethnomusicology.

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Society for Ethnomusicology begins a meeting whose content in the next two and a half days should, at least, mark a new phase in the development of our discipline. For the first time, to the best of my knowledge, we as ethnomusicologists have come together not so much as a conference but rather as a group of scholars talking among ourselves to attack basic problems in our field of interest which should lead us all toward a better understanding of one another's points of view and, more important, to a conscious shaping of what ethnomusicology is, does, and should be. All meetings, of course, are a part of the history of any discipline, but in this case we are deliberately setting out to explore our area of study in depth and to attempt to seek a better understanding of our purpose and a firmer rationale for our being. Thus more than usual we are taking part in the making of the history of science, at least as ethnomusicology is a part of science.

I have said that I am not an historian of science, but speaking as an observer, it seems to me that what we have done in ethnomusicology to this point in time reflects basic patterns in the development of almost all disciplines. Broadly speaking, a discipline begins with an idea which then is translated into a description of the particular phenomena with which that idea is concerned. Other minds follow the leader, and his methods of approaching the subject are used to add to an ever-widening circle of further description. Methodology is expanded and a descriptive taxonomy begins to develop, but eventually students begin to move beyond the descriptive phase and to ask broader questions of why and how the particular phenomena have come into being. This, in turn, leads to a renewal of interest in the aims and purposes of what has now developed into a full-fledged discipline, and definition follows, definition which is couched in ever more comprehensive and yet sharper terms.

It is this phase that we have reached and perhaps already passed in ethnomusicology, and if our Society has made a major contribution to the discipline it has probably been most clearly evident in the series of articles which has appeared in our *Journal* concerning the problem of defining what it is we in fact do. Willard Rhodes, M. Kolinski, Mantle Hood, Gilbert Chase, myself, and J. H. Kwabena Nketia, have each contributed to this series of articles; and each has approached it from his own point of view, though it is remarkable to see the basic unanimity of the approach. The series itself has contributed greatly to our broadened understanding of ethnomusicology, and at the same time has served to pinpoint with the sharpest accuracy to date what ethnomusicology is.

At these meetings, then, and with this particular Plenary Session, we move into what is the next logical question for our discipline—the purposes of ethnomusicology. I do not expect that we shall solve the problem, nor that we shall reach unanimity in our discussions, but I hope

this may be the opening which will lead to a new series of the exposition of our views, and ultimately, then, to some consensuses of why we do what we do.

It is important first, I think, to distinguish briefly among three kinds of problems which emerge when we talk about a discipline. First, we can use definition; that is, what is the thing with which we deal, and what are its characteristics? Second, we can use description; that is, what does it do and how does it do it? These questions have been discussed at some length in the series of articles to which I have previously alluded, but they are not central to the problem which is before us this morning. They must, then, be distinguished from the purpose of what we do; that is, why do we do what we do, what is it for, and perhaps most important, what should we do? The distinctions among these kinds of problems are not always easy to make, but I shall attempt in the following discussion to exclude the first two and to concentrate upon the third—the purposes of ethnomusicology.

## I

In looking through the literature of ethnomusicology, it is remarkable to see how little attention has been paid to this problem, but among those approaches which have been mentioned, mostly in passing, it is possible to discern perhaps four major points of view, each of which I should like to discuss briefly.

The first of these I think is common to us all, and with tongue in cheek and with no malice intended, I should like to label it the White Knight Concept. This is the point of view that the music of other peoples of the world is much abused and maligned, that such music is, in fact, fine and worthy both of study and appreciation, that most Westerners do not give it its due, and that therefore it is up to those of us who know better to protect it from the scorn of others and to explain and champion it wherever possible. At one time or another, this point of view has appeared in a great variety of writings by a great number of scholars, among them for example, Jaap Kunst, who calls attention to the fact that most Westerners think of the music of other peoples "as nothing more than either expressions of inferior, more primitive civilizations, or as a kind of musical perversion," and who goes on to debate the point with intensity. This kind of argument implies that the purpose of ethnomusicology is to disabuse Westerners of their distorted notions; in other words, we function here as knights in shining armor riding to the defense of non-Western music. Even those of us who are not Westerners often take this point of view, and of course this is not surprising, for it is truly one of our functions, one of our legitimate purposes, and we would be derelict if we did not attack ethnocentrism where we find it.

But our purpose, I hope, is wider and more substantial than this, although I am perfectly happy to accept it as a smaller subdivision of what it is that we should do.

A second approach to the problem of our purpose is one which is again widespread among ethnomusicologists, but at the same time one which involves fears that I find I cannot fully accept. I shall call this, with similar facetiousness I fear, the Duty of Preservation Concept, and this has to do with the oft-expressed fear that the music of the folk is fast disappearing and that it must be recorded and studied before it is gone. Curt Sachs has expressed this concept in terms most analogous to what I have said here; in writing about tribal, folk and Oriental music, he has noted:

Such music cannot be bought in stores, but comes from faithful tradition or from personal contributions of tribesmen. It is never soulless or thoughtless, never passive, but always vital, organic, and functional; indeed, it is always dignified. This is more than we can say of music in the West.

As an indispensable and precious part of culture, it commands respect. And respect implies the duty to help in preserving it.

There is, of course, something of the White Knight approach involved here, but what is specifically important is the idea that the music of nonliterate peoples is dying out and that it is our duty to preserve it. Erich M. von Hornbostel wrote to the same point as early as 1905, and in his first full-fledged Editorial in the *African Music Society Newsletter*, Hugh Tracey commented on the problems of "... working against time in studying the receding natural art forms of [Africa's] people," a theme which he has since consistently followed.

Again, I should like to make it clear that this seems to me to be a legitimate aim or purpose in our studies, but I do not feel that it is of exclusive importance. I cannot help but observe that on the one hand music has extraordinary tenacity, and on the other, that change is a constant in human experience. In respect to the former, one need only draw attention to the Negro in the New World; in Brazil, for example, where the first African slaves were imported about 1525, African music still flourishes and indeed does so in urban areas where we would expect the greatest acculturative impact to be present. In respect to the latter, change is a constant in human experience, and there is very little we can do about it. Africans in Johannesburg adopt jazz and the pennywhistle; American Indians compartmentalize their own and Western music and in some cases forget the former and adopt the latter.

This is not an argument, of course, that we should neglect the recording and study of any music simply because change is inevitable; I hold quite the contrary point of view. But change does occur and there is no reason to suppose either that it will not do so in the future or that

we can stem the process. By all means let us be aware of the problems of changing music systems, but certainly preservation of the present so that it will, hopefully, not become the past, is not our major purpose.

A third approach to the problem of the purpose of ethnomusicology can perhaps best be called the Communication Concept. This idea has been most widely advanced by Mantle Hood, at least in recent years, and it involves the viewpoint that music is a means of communication which can thus be used in certain ways to further world understanding. I find this concept somewhat difficult to understand precisely, because it seems to me that it has been approached in at least three different ways. In the Preface to the brochure concerning the UCLA Institute of Ethnomusicology, Hood writes as follows:

In the latter half of the Twentieth Century it may well be that the very existence of man depends on the accuracy of his communications. Communication among peoples is a two-way street: speaking and listening, informing and being informed, constructively evaluating and welcoming constructive criticism. Communication is accurate to the extent that it is founded on a sure knowledge of the man with whom we would hold intercourse.

He then continues to point out that music is one means of communication which has been neglected, and indicates that it is a fruitful means of communication between and among the world's people.

There is, of course, a sharp difference between regarding music as a communicative device on the one hand and as a so-called "universal language" on the other. In the past there has been considerable espousal of the latter view, but ethnomusicologists have consistently rejected it; George Herzog in 1946 noted:

We indulge in a surprising number of beliefs that are fittingly called popular myths. One of them is the notion that music is a 'universal language.' . . . [But] our music . . . consists of a number of dialects, some of them as mutually unintelligible as are found in language.

Even earlier, in 1941, Charles Seeger took an almost identical point of view:

We must, of course, be careful to avoid the fallacy that music is a 'universal language.' There are many music-communities in the world, though not, probably, as many as there are speech-communities. Many of them are mutually unintelligible.

I think we can accept without further discussion the idea that music is not a universal language, but that it is, clearly, a mechanism of communication between and among human beings. However, it is not precisely clear how and why music is communication. On a simple level we can say that music communicates within a given music community; we may further extend this to say that the very fact that people sing may



communicate certain limited things to members of markedly different music communities, but certainly, to the best of my knowledge, we know little about such problems. If it is questions of this sort that Mantle Hood intends to raise in speaking of communication as a world problem, and the study of music in that context, then it is indeed important that the question be considered.

In another context, Hood has emphasized the importance of music in fostering international understanding:

Today, as never before, governmental agencies of the nations of the world are recognizing the fact that the international understanding and goodwill is possible only when the cultural expressions of the peoples involved are comprehended. To this end the ethnomusicologist must set for himself exacting standards worthy of his responsibility.

This would seem to imply, at least, that ethnomusicology ought to function primarily to smooth international tension; if this is indeed the meaning of this paragraph, I find myself sympathetic with the proposition and supportive of it, but to a limited extent.

Finally, in an address at the 1958 meetings of this Society in Berkeley, Hood expressed himself as follows:

These cultural expressions, representing the heart and soul of a people, can serve as a kind of camera obscura reducing the vast and complex panorama of their multifarious activities to a sharp image in miniature. Through language and literature, through music, dance and theater, through the graphic and plastic arts can be revealed in natural color and living images all of those essential attributes which go to make up the very identity of a people.

With this point of view, I find myself in almost complete accord.

The Communication Concept, then, seems to me to be divided into three possible approaches: first, music as communication between and among peoples; second, ethnomusicology as an agency of international understanding; and third, music as a reflection and condensation, as it were, of the values, goals, and attitudes of peoples. The purpose of ethnomusicology, in this case, is apparently to understand people through music, and to apply the result toward lessening international tension.

A fourth approach to this problem of the purposes of ethnomusicology falls under the rubric of the Shotgun Concept. That is, we have sometimes tended to throw all possible reasons for studying ethnomusicology into the common pot, apparently in the hope that nothing, or very little, will be forgotten. This is not necessarily bad, but it results in an approach which is primarily unstructured and in which catholicity is substituted for direction. In the Introduction to *Music in Primitive Culture*, Bruno Nettl takes something of this approach, listing at least nine different reasons for studying, not ethnomusicology as we have

come to define it, but rather what he calls "primitive music." Such music, he says, "is a new, rich source of experience for Western musicians," and composers. It "widens and enriches the experience of the listener as well as the composer." "Used as an educational medium, primitive music tends to make a student more tolerant of diverse styles and idioms." "The music historian may use it in his efforts to determine the origin of music." "A knowledge of primitive musical styles is . . . helpful to the psychologist of music." "The anthropologist and the historian of culture may find through examination of primitive music a substantiation of their theories; the folklorist may see its relationship to the music of rural European populations and be able to trace the latter to its origins; the historian of musical instruments often finds prototypes of European forms in some of the simpler ones in primitive cultures. And the linguist uncovers ethno-linguistic materials."

Although my emphases would not tend to fall in the same places, each of these may be one legitimate purpose for studying ethnomusicology, but the problem is that a broad listing of this sort leads to no real conclusion. Nettl adds:

In summary, then, to all people interested in music and to all interested in primitive culture, the study of this music offers new fields for exploration and a wider range for reflection.

This is, of course, perfectly true, but it is also almost totally bland; surely in studying ethnomusicology we are searching for more than broader horizons.

These four approaches are those which have characterized most of what little effort we have made in the past to describe the purposes of our study. I should like to reemphasize two things: first, I find little with which I flatly disagree in these approaches, save for the fact that each seems to me to be too narrow in scope, emphasizing one thing over another to the exclusion of our wider purpose; and second, given the tiny amount of space devoted to this general question of purpose in the vast amount of ethnomusicological writing, I can only express my thanks to those students I have cited, for they are the very few who have come to grips with the problem. Each has contributed in his own way, and I am grateful to them.

## II

I am sure that no one here will be surprised to learn that I have my own ideas on this subject; indeed, having noted the ideas of others and commented upon them, it would be unfair and even unwise of me to attempt to get away scot free. I should like, then, to put forward these ideas for your consideration and discussion, for I hope, at least, that they

represent both a fusion of the concepts that have already been expressed and a consolidation of them into a reasonably precisely honed point of view.

Without further ado, then, there are but two major reasons for studying ethnomusicology, two purposes of our study. These are not vastly complex or difficult to understand, though in their ramifications they become, of course, more involved than might appear at first blush.

First, music is a universal human phenomenon and, as such, it deserves study in its own right. The ultimate interest of man is man himself, and thus music, produced and nurtured by man, is part of what he does and part of what he studies about himself. This study, further, can in my opinion be carried on for either of two reasons with equal legitimacy. First, it can be done for the aesthetic pleasure it gives us. There is nothing wrong with this; men everywhere are concerned in one way or another with the pleasures of life, and if listening to and studying music are pleasurable activities, we may as well take advantage of it. I well recall talking as a graduate student with the British anthropologist E. E. Evans-Pritchard; the conversation turned to his own reasons for being an anthropologist, and his answer to the direct question was simply, "Why, I like it." But we may also study this human phenomenon on the scientific basis that in studying any and all phenomena we increase our knowledge of ourselves. This knowledge may or may not be immediately useful, it may or may not apply to other problems quite unexpectedly, and it may or may not turn out to be vastly important in connection with other pieces of information. I think this is a simple fact we must consider; man studies himself and he does so in the hope that what he learns may lighten his lot. If it does, well and good; if it does not—well, our culture places a premium upon learning, and the history of our learning indicates clearly that there has indeed been little, if any product of our learning that has turned out to be useless. I do not really believe, you see, that ethnomusicology is useless; we have too much evidence to the contrary already. But even if it were, while I would not myself pursue it further I think I would defend the right of others to do so.

My second reason for studying ethnomusicology is equally important, but perhaps more precise and more immediately "scientific." I have expressed these ideas once before in print, but not in the same context, and I hope that you will bear with me if I repeat myself to some small extent. It seems to me that in the history of ethnomusicology we have given undue importance and stress to musical sounds as a thing in themselves. That is, we have taken the sounds produced by any particular group of people as a phenomenon made up of interrelated parts which behave according to certain principles and regularities inherent in themselves. We have looked at musical sound as a structural system, i.e., in static, synchronic terms, and we have tended to make our analyses

without reference to the human behavior out of which the sound system arises.

For music is, after all, human behavior. No musical sounds, with the debatable exception of the wind in the trees or the singing of birds, can exist, without, first, the production of that sound by a human being, and second, the reception of that sound by another human being. Music does not exist unless some individual or group of individuals produces it.

But in order to produce music, the human being must behave in certain ways. In order to produce a sound the individual must indulge in physiological behavior; he must tense the vocal chords, expel air, and so forth, and if he wishes the sound to concur with what is considered to be music in his particular society, he must learn to do these things in patterned ways. No musical performer, on no matter what level his performance is couched, can escape the cultural conditioning which shapes music as inevitably as it does other aspects of behavior. But second, the behavior of the individual making music is conditioned in other, outward ways simply by the fact that he is indulging in music behavior. His motor behavior is a part of this, and so is his social behavior: a person singing a funeral song does not behave in the same way as when he is singing as accompaniment to drinking beer. And further, if he is a recognized musician, his behavior is different again, for what we require of musicians is an almost total way of life. This, too, is behaving, and it is learned; without it, we cannot perform music according to the tenets of our particular society. So music cannot exist unless there is human behavior, for music is but a product of that behavior.

But the behavior itself is always underlain by a deeper level, and this concerns the concepts that men have of what proper musical behavior is and should be. Thus before the behavior comes the concept; we think about what we do and shape our behavior accordingly, and thus produce musical sound.

Finally, the sound we produce, which comes through behavior, which in turn is shaped by concept, is judged both by the individual and by other members of his society in terms of its success in meeting musical criteria according to the principles accepted by that society. If the sound product is judged successful, then the concept is reinforced and the behavior repeated as nearly as possible; if the sound product is unsuccessful, then the concept must be changed which in turn alters the behavior, resulting in a changed sound product which more closely approximates the standards for music in the society at hand.

Looked at from this point of view, then, music is a product of human behavior; behavior depends upon concept; and concept is, in turn, shaped by a feedback from the product in which the latter is judged by the society at large in its own musical terms. It thus seems extremely important to me to realize that music sound is but a product of human

behavior; that it is not a phenomenon by and of itself, operating according to its own inherent structural principles; and that an understanding of it depends upon an understanding of behavior, concept, and feedback upon concept. This is why I have previously defined ethnomusicology as the study of music in culture, and it is also why I think ethnomusicology should be studied. We share both with social science and with the humanities the extremely important task of studying human behavior, for we seek—through music in this case—an understanding of why men behave as they do.

I have tried to review for you briefly in this paper some of the reasons given by students of our discipline for their studies; and I have tried to give you in capsule form my own reasons. I would like to reemphasize that virtually all the reasons I have discussed seem legitimate to me in one way or another; if I do not consider some of them primary, it is because I believe quite simply that others are more important. In any case, we are searching here for the purposes which lie behind our discipline: I have attempted to state what I believe to be those purposes as clearly and honestly as I can.

# CULTURE AND PERSONALITY

MANY DECADES ago the word "anthropology" conjured up a vision of a bone-measuring scientist. Later this was displaced by the picture of an intrepid fieldworker in a remote and little-known land. Today the sophisticate is likely to conceive of anthropology as combining fieldwork and psychoanalysis. None of these images is correct, though each has its justification in genuine anthropological activities. This book is testimony to the breadth of studies which comprise anthropology and obviate any too particularized stereotype of the anthropologist.

Culture and personality studies are an important and specialized branch of cultural anthropology. Actually, these studies are not themselves homogeneous but fall into a number of types associated with different goals and methods. Significantly, the major development of these studies occurred within anthropology itself: though other disciplines have assisted with theoretical and methodological contributions, personality and culture studies are indigenous to anthropology, not importations.

Our selections treat only a portion of the major themes in the culture and personality approach. We are fortunate to be able to include the statement by Ruth Benedict, although we must admit that her ethnographic representations of such cultures as Dobu and Kwakiutl have been much criticized. Nonetheless, Benedict was one of the first to raise problems about the cross-cultural nature of mental illness and its expression. Her article also encapsulates the orientation of her widely read book, *Patterns*

*of Culture*. The Anthony F. C. Wallace selection replaces a critical article by two non-anthropologists. But the main reason for change was the desire to show something of very recent thought. Wallace does play the role of critic, but goes further to make positive suggestions of his own. Margaret Mead's article, finally, suggests ways the culture and personality approach responds to the need for dealing with change.

## 47 Anthropology and the Abnormal



Ruth Benedict

ETHNOGRAPHIC REPORTS CONTAIN NUMEROUS EXAMPLES OF VARIOUS KINDS OF behavior which, treated in our culture as symptoms of mental illness, are regarded in other cultures as unexceptional, normal or even desirable. Consider some of the problems this poses. Is mental illness a relative concept, dependent on culturally defined behavioral norms? Does that in turn mean that people said to be mentally ill in one culture would be found "normal" in another, and vice versa? Does the possibility of an objective science of the mind founder on the rock of cultural relativism?

We may be forgiven, perhaps, if we enter upon the consideration of these problems through an article published more than thirty years ago by a recognized pioneer in the field of culture and personality. The second edition of these readings has sacrificed a number of classic articles, many of which still retain a controversial sting or have since developed one. Such sacrifices have been motivated by the growth of knowledge and analytical skills. While the field to which Benedict addressed herself in this article has also made significant strides, the questions raised by this article are still with us.

SOURCE: *The Journal of General Psychology*, Vol. 10 (1934), pp. 59-79. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

Ruth Benedict (1887-1948) was Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University. As the author of *Patterns of Culture* which, in paperback, has sold more widely than any other volume of anthropology, she brought the ideas of cultural relativism to a vast audience. She did fieldwork among the Indians of the Southwest, particularly the Pima and Zuni, and pioneered in several areas—personality and culture, the study of culture at a distance, and cultural integration. Among her works are *Patterns of Culture* (1934), *Race: Science and Politics* (1940) and *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946).



Modern social anthropology has become more and more a study of the varieties and common elements of cultural environment and the consequences of these in human behavior. For such a study of diverse social orders primitive peoples fortunately provide a laboratory not yet entirely vitiated by the spread of a standardized worldwide civilization. Dyaks and Hopis, Fijians and Yakuts are significant for psychological and sociological study because only among these simpler peoples has there been sufficient isolation to give opportunity for the development of localized social forms. In the higher cultures the standardization of custom and belief over a couple of continents has given a false sense of the inevitability of the particular forms that have gained currency, and we need to turn to a wider survey in order to check the conclusions we hastily base upon this near-universality of familiar customs. Most of the simpler cultures did not gain the wide currency of the one which, out of our experience, we identify with human nature, but this was for various historical reasons, and certainly not for any that gives us as its carriers a monopoly of social good or of social sanity. Modern civilization, from this point of view, becomes not a necessary pinnacle of human achievement but one entry in a long series of possible adjustments.

These adjustments, whether they are in mannerisms like the ways of showing anger, or joy, or grief in any society, or in major human drives like those of sex, prove to be far more variable than experience in any one culture would suggest. In certain fields, such as that of religion or of formal marriage arrangements, these wide limits of variability are well known and can be fairly described. In others it is not yet possible to give a generalized account, but that does not absolve us of the task of indicating the significance of the work that has been done and of the problems that have arisen.

One of these problems relates to the customary modern normal-abnormal categories and our conclusions regarding them. In how far are such categories culturally determined, or in how far can we with assurance regard them as absolute? In how far can we regard inability to function socially as diagnostic of abnormality, or in how far is it necessary to regard this as a function of the culture?

As a matter of fact, one of the most striking facts that emerge from a study of widely varying cultures is the ease with which our abnormals function in other cultures. It does not matter what kind of "abnormality" we choose for illustration, those which indicate extreme instability, or those which are more in the nature of character traits like sadism or delusions of grandeur or of persecution, there are well-described cultures in which these abnormals function at ease and with honor, and apparently without danger or difficulty to the society.

The most notorious of these is trance and catalepsy. Even a very mild mystic is aberrant in our culture. But most peoples have regarded even

extreme psychic manifestations not only as normal and desirable, but even as characteristic of highly valued and gifted individuals. This was true even in our own cultural background in that period when Catholicism made the ecstatic experience the mark of sainthood. It is hard for us, born and brought up in a culture that makes no use of the experience, to realize how important a rôle it may play and how many individuals are capable of it, once it has been given an honorable place in any society.

Some of the Indian tribes of California accorded prestige principally to those who passed through certain trance experiences. Not all of these tribes believed that it was exclusively women who were so blessed, but among the Shasta this was the convention. Their shamans were women, and they were accorded the greatest prestige in the community. They were chosen because of their constitutional liability to trance and allied manifestations. One day the woman who was so destined, while she was about her usual work, would fall suddenly to the ground. She had heard a voice speaking to her in tones of the greatest intensity. Turning, she had seen a man with drawn bow and arrow. He commanded her to sing on pain of being shot through the heart by his arrow, but under the stress of the experience she fell senseless. Her family gathered. She was lying rigid, hardly breathing. They knew that for some time she had had dreams of a special character which indicated a shamanistic calling, dreams of escaping grizzly bears, falling off cliffs or trees, or of being surrounded by swarms of yellow jackets. The community knew therefore what to expect. After a few hours the woman began to moan gently and to roll about upon the ground, trembling violently. She was supposed to be repeating the song which she had been told to sing and which during the trance had been taught her by the spirit. As she revived her moaning became more and more clearly the spirit's song until at last she called out the name of the spirit itself, and immediately blood oozed from her mouth.

When the woman had come to herself after the first encounter with her spirit she danced that night her first initiatory shamanistic dance, holding herself by a rope that was swung from the ceiling. For three nights she danced, and on the third night she had to receive in her body her power from her spirit. She was dancing, and as she felt the approach of the moment she called out, "He will shoot me, he will shoot me." Her friends stood close, for when she reeled in a kind of cataleptic seizure, they had to seize her before she fell or she would die. From this time on she had in her body a visible materialization of her spirit's power, an icicle-like object which in her dances thereafter she would exhibit, producing it from one part of her body and returning it to another part. From this time on she continued to validate her supernatural power by further cataleptic demonstrations, and she was called upon in great emergencies of life and death, for curing and for divination and for counsel.

She became in other words by this procedure a woman of great power and importance.

It is clear that, so far from regarding cataleptic seizures as blots upon the family escutcheon and as evidences of dreaded disease, cultural approval had seized upon them and made of them the pathway to authority over one's fellows. They were the outstanding characteristic of the most respected social type, the type which functioned with most honor and reward in the community. It was precisely the cataleptic individuals who in this culture were singled out for authority and leadership.

The availability of "abnormal" types in the social structure, provided they are types that are culturally selected by that group, is illustrated from every part of the world. The shamans of Siberia dominate their communities. According to the ideas of these peoples, they are individuals who by submission to the will of the spirits have been cured of a grievous illness—the onset of the seizures—and have acquired by this means great supernatural power and incomparable vigor and health. Some, during the period of the call, are violently insane for several years, others irresponsible to the point where they have to be watched constantly lest they wander off in the snow and freeze to death, others ill and emaciated to the point of death, sometimes with bloody sweat. It is the shamanistic practice which constitutes their cure, and the extreme physical exertion of a Siberian seance leaves them, they claim, rested and able to enter immediately upon a similar performance. Cataleptic seizures are regarded as an essential part of any shamanistic performance.

A good description of the neurotic condition of the shaman and the attention given him by his society is an old one by Canon Callaway recorded in the words of an old Zulu of South Africa:

The condition of a man who is about to become a diviner is this; at first he is apparently robust, but in the process of time he begins to be delicate, not having any real disease, but being delicate. He habitually avoids certain kinds of food, choosing what he likes, and he does not eat much of that; he is continually complaining of pains in different parts of his body. And he tells them that he has dreamt that he was carried away by a river. He dreams of many things, and his body is muddled (as a river) and he becomes a house of dreams. He dreams constantly of many things, and on awaking tells his friends, 'My body is muddled today; I dreamt many men were killing me, and I escaped I know not how. On waking one part of my body felt different from other parts; it was no longer alike all over.' At last that man is very ill, and they go to the diviners to enquire.

The diviners do not at once see that he is about to have a soft head (that is, the sensitivity associated with shamanism). It is difficult for them to see the truth; they continually talk nonsense and make false statements, until all the man's cattle are devoured at their command, they saying that the spirit of his

people demands cattle, that it may eat food. At length all the man's property is expended, he still being ill; and they no longer knew what to do, for he has no more cattle, and his friends help him in such things as he needs.

At length a diviner comes and says that all the others are wrong. He says, 'He is possessed by the spirits. There is nothing else. They move in him, being divided into two parties; some say, "No, we do not wish our child injured. We do not wish it." It is for that reason he does not get well. If you bar the way against the spirits, you will be killing him. For he will not be a diviner; neither will he ever be a man again.'

So the man may be ill two years without getting better; perhaps even longer than that. He is confined to his house. This continues till his hair falls off. And his body is dry and scurfy; he does not like to anoint himself. He shows that he is about to be a diviner by yawning again and again, and by sneezing continually. It is apparent also from his being very fond of snuff; not allowing any long time to pass without taking some. And people begin to see that he has had what is good given to him.

After that he is ill; he has convulsions, and when water has been poured on him they then cease for a time. He habitually sheds tears, at first slight, then at last he weeps aloud and when the people are asleep he is heard making a noise and wakes the people by his singing; he has composed a song, and the men and women awake and go to sing in concert with him. All the people of the village are troubled by want of sleep; for a man who is becoming a diviner causes great trouble, for he does not sleep, but works constantly with his brain; his sleep is merely by snatches, and he wakes up singing many songs; and people who are near quit their villages by night when they hear him singing aloud and go to sing in concert. Perhaps he sings till morning, no one having slept. And then he leaps about the house like a frog; and the house becomes too small for him, and he goes out leaping and singing, and shaking like a reed in the water, and dripping with perspiration.

In this state of things they daily expect his death; he is now but skin and bones, and they think that tomorrow's sun will not leave him alive. At this time many cattle are eaten, for the people encourage his becoming a diviner. At length (in a dream) an ancient ancestral spirit is pointed out to him. This spirit says to him, 'Go to So-and-so and he will churn for you an emetic (the medicine the drinking of which is a part of shamanistic initiation) that you may be a diviner altogether.' Then he is quiet a few days, having gone to the diviner to have the medicine churned for him; and he comes back quite another man, being now cleansed and a diviner indeed.

Thereafter for life when he achieves possession, he foretells events, and finds lost articles.

It is clear that culture may value and make socially available even highly unstable human types. If it chooses to treat their peculiarities as the most valued variants of human behavior, the individuals in question will rise to the occasion and perform their social rôles without reference to our usual ideas of the types who can make social adjustments and those who cannot.

Cataleptic and trance phenomena are, of course, only one illustration of the fact that those whom we regard as abnormals may function adequately in other cultures. Many of our culturally discarded traits are selected for elaboration in different societies. Homosexuality is an excellent example, for in this case our attention is not constantly diverted, as in the consideration of trance, to the interruption of routine activity which it implies. Homosexuality poses the problem very simply. A tendency toward this trait in our culture exposes an individual to all the conflicts to which all aberrants are always exposed, and we tend to identify the consequences of this conflict with homosexuality. But these consequences are obviously local and cultural. Homosexuals in many societies are not incompetent, but they may be such if the culture asks adjustments of them that would strain any man's vitality. Wherever homosexuality has been given an honorable place in any society, those to whom it is congenial have filled adequately the honorable rôles society assigns to them. Plato's *Republic* is, of course, the most convincing statement of such a reading of homosexuality. It is presented as one of the major means to the good life, and it was generally so regarded in Greece at that time.

The cultural attitude toward homosexuals has not always been on such a high ethical plane, but it has been very varied. Among many American Indian tribes there exists the institution of the berdache, as the French called them. These men-women were men who at puberty or thereafter took the dress and the occupations of women. Sometimes they married other men and lived with them. Sometimes they were men with no inversion, persons of weak sexual endowment whose chose this rôle to avoid the jeers of the women. The berdaches were never regarded as of first-rate supernatural power, as similar men-women were in Siberia, but rather as leaders in women's occupations, good healers in certain diseases, or among certain tribes, as the genial organizers of social affairs. In any case, they were socially placed. They were not left exposed to the conflicts that visit the deviant who is excluded from participation in the recognized patterns of his society.

The most spectacular illustrations of the extent to which normality may be culturally defined are those cultures where an abnormality of our culture is the cornerstone of their social structure. It is not possible to do justice to these possibilities in a short discussion. A recent study of an island of northwest Melanesia by Fortune describes a society built upon traits which we regard as beyond the border of paranoia. In this tribe the exogamic groups look upon each other as prime manipulators of black magic, so that one marries always into an enemy group which remains for life one's deadly and unappeasable foes. They look upon a good garden crop as a confession of theft, for everyone is engaged in making

magic to induce into his garden the productiveness of his neighbors'; therefore no secrecy in the island is so rigidly insisted upon as the secrecy of a man's harvesting of his yams. Their polite phrase at the acceptance of a gift is, "And if you now poison me, how shall I repay you this present?" Their preoccupation with poisoning is constant; no woman ever leaves her cooking pot for a moment untended. Even the great affinal economic exchanges that are characteristic of this Melanesian culture area are quite altered in Dobu since they are incompatible with this fear and distrust that pervades the culture. They go farther and people the whole world outside their own quarters with such malignant spirits that all-night feasts and ceremonials simply do not occur here. They have even rigorous religiously enforced customs that forbid the sharing of seed even in one family group. Anyone else's food is deadly poison to you, so that communality of stores is out of the question. For some months before harvest the whole society is on the verge of starvation, but if one falls to the temptation and eats up one's seed yams, one is an outcast and a beachcomber for life. There is no coming back. It involves, as a matter of course, divorce and the breaking of all social ties.

Now in this society where no one may work with another and no one may share with another, Fortune describes the individual who was regarded by all his fellows as crazy. He was not one of those who periodically ran amok and, beside himself and frothing at the mouth, fell with a knife upon anyone he could reach. Such behavior they did not regard as putting anyone outside the pale. They did not even put the individuals who were known to be liable to these attacks under any kind of control. They merely fled when they saw the attack coming on and kept out of the way. "He would be all right tomorrow." But there was one man of sunny, kindly disposition who liked work and liked to be helpful. The compulsion was too strong for him to repress it in favor of the opposite tendencies of his culture. Men and women never spoke of him without laughing; he was silly and simple and definitely crazy. Nevertheless, to the ethnologist used to a culture that has, in Christianity, made his type the model of all virtue, he seemed a pleasant fellow.

An even more extreme example, because it is of a culture that has built itself upon a more complex abnormality, is that of the North Pacific Coast of North America. The civilization of the Kwakiutl, at the time when it was first recorded in the last decades of the nineteenth century, was one of the most vigorous in North America. It was built up on an ample economic supply of goods, the fish which furnished their food staple being practically inexhaustible and obtainable with comparatively small labor, and the wood which furnished the material for their houses, their furnishings, and their arts being, with however much labor, always procurable. They lived in coastal villages that compared

favorably in size with those of any other American Indians and they kept up constant communication by means of sea-going dug-out canoes.

It was one of the most vigorous and zestful of the aboriginal cultures of North America, with complex crafts and ceremonials, and elaborate and striking arts. It certainly had none of the earmarks of a sick civilization. The tribes of the Northwest Coast had wealth, and exactly in our terms. That is, they had not only a surplus of economic goods, but they made a game of the manipulation of wealth. It was by no means a mere direct transcription of economic needs and the filling of those needs. It involved the idea of capital, of interest, and of conspicuous waste. It was a game with all the binding rules of a game, and a person entered it as a child. His father distributed wealth for him, according to his ability, at a small feast or potlatch, and each gift the receiver was obliged to accept and to return after a short interval with interest that ran to about 100 per cent a year. By the time the child was grown, therefore, he was well launched, a larger potlatch had been given for him on various occasions of exploit or initiation, and he had wealth either out at usury or in his own possession. Nothing in the civilization could be enjoyed without validating it by the distribution of this wealth. Everything that was valued, names and songs as well as material objects, were passed down in family lines, but they were always publicly assumed with accompanying sufficient distributions of property. It was the game of validating and exercising all the privileges one could accumulate from one's various forbears, or by gift, or by marriage, that made the chief interest of the culture. Everyone in his degree took part in it, but many, of course, mainly as spectators. In its highest form it was played out between rival chiefs representing not only themselves and their family lines but their communities, and the object of the contest was to glorify oneself and to humiliate one's opponent. On this level of greatness the property involved was no longer represented by blankets, so many thousand of them to a potlatch, but by higher units of value. These higher units were like our bank notes. They were incised copper tablets, each of them named, and having a value that depended upon their illustrious history. This was as high as ten thousand blankets, and to possess one of them, still more to enhance its value at a great potlatch, was one of the greatest glories within the compass of the chiefs of the Northwest Coast.

The details of this manipulation of wealth are in many ways a parody on our own economic arrangements, but it is with the motivations that were recognized in this contest that we are concerned in this discussion. The drives were those which in our own culture we should call megalomaniac. There was an uncensored self-glorification and ridicule of the opponent that it is hard to equal in other cultures outside of the

monologues of the abnormal. Any of the songs and speeches of their chiefs at a potlatch illustrate the usual tenor:

Wa, out of the way. Wa, out the way. Turn your faces that I may give way to my anger by striking my fellow chiefs.

Wa, great potlatch, greatest potlatch.<sup>1</sup> The little ones<sup>2</sup> only pretend, the little stubborn ones, they only sell one copper again and again and give it away to the little chiefs of the tribe.

Ah, do not ask in vain for mercy. Ah, do not ask in vain for mercy and raise your hands, you with lolling tongues! I shall break,<sup>3</sup> I shall let disappear the great copper that has the name Kentsegum, the property of the great foolish one, the great extravagant one, the great surpassing one, the one farthest ahead, the great Cannibal dancer among the chiefs.<sup>4</sup>

I am the great chief who makes people ashamed.

I am the great chief who makes people ashamed.

Our chief brings shame to the faces.

Our chief brings jealousy to the faces.

Our chief makes people cover their faces by what he is continually doing in this world, from the beginning to the end of the year,

Giving again and again oil feasts to the tribes.

I am the great chief who vanquishes

I am the great chief who vanquishes.

Only at those who continue running round and round in this world, working hard, losing their tails,<sup>5</sup> I sneer, at the chiefs below the true chief.<sup>6</sup>

Have mercy on them! <sup>7</sup> Put oil on their dry heads with brittle hair, those who do not comb their hair!

I sneer at the chiefs below the true, real chief. I am the great chief who makes people ashamed.

. . . . .

I am the only great tree, I the chief.

I am the only great tree, I the chief.

You are my subordinates, tribes.

You sit in the middle of the rear of the house, tribes.

Bring me your counter of property, tribes, that he may in vain try to count what is going to be given away by the great copper-maker, the chief.

Oh, I laugh at them, I sneer at them who empty boxes<sup>8</sup> in their houses, their potlatch houses, their inviting houses that are full only of hunger. They follow along after me like young sawbill ducks. I am the only great tree, I the chief.

. . . . .

<sup>1</sup>The feast he is now engaged in giving.    <sup>2</sup>His opponents.

<sup>3</sup>To break a copper, showing in this way how far one rose above even the most superlatively valuable things, was the final mark of greatness.

<sup>4</sup>Himself.    <sup>5</sup>As salmon do.    <sup>6</sup>Himself.    <sup>7</sup>Irony, of course.

<sup>8</sup>Of treasure.



I have quoted a number of these hymns of self-glorification because by an association which psychiatrists will recognize as fundamental these delusions of grandeur were essential in the paranoid view of life which was so strikingly developed in this culture. All of existence was seen in terms of insult. Not only derogatory acts performed by a neighbor or an enemy, but all untoward events, like a cut when one's axe slipped, or a ducking when one's canoe overturned, were insults. All alike threatened first and foremost one's ego security, and the first thought one was allowed was how to get even, how to wipe out the insult. Grief was little institutionalized, but sulking took its place. Until he had resolved upon a course of action by which to save his face after any misfortune, whether it was the slipping of a wedge in felling a tree, or the death of a favorite child, an Indian of the Northwest Coast retired to his pallet with his face to the wall and neither ate nor spoke. He rose from it to follow out some course which according to the traditional rules should reinstate him in his own eyes and those of the community: to distribute property enough to wipe out the stain, or to go headhunting in order that somebody else should be made to mourn. His activities in neither case were specific responses to the bereavement he had just passed through, but were elaborately directed toward getting even. If he had not the money to distribute and did not succeed in killing someone to humiliate another, he might take his own life. He had staked everything, in his view of life, upon a certain picture of the self, and, when the bubble of his self-esteem was pricked, he had no interest, no occupation to fall back on, and the collapse of his inflated ego left him prostrate.

Every contingency of life was dealt with in these two traditional ways. To them the two were equivalent. Whether one fought with weapons or "fought with property," as they say, the same idea was at the bottom of both. In the olden times, they say, they fought with spears, but now they fight with property. One overcomes one's opponents in equivalent fashion in both, matching forces and seeing that one comes out ahead, and one can thumb one's nose at the vanquished rather more satisfactorily at a potlatch than on a battlefield. Every occasion in life was noticed, not in its own terms, as a stage in the sex life of the individual or as a climax of joy or of grief; but as furthering this drama of consolidating one's own prestige and bringing shame to one's guests. Whether it was the occasion of the birth of a child, or a daughter's adolescence, or of the marriage of one's son, they were all equivalent raw material for the culture to use for this one traditionally selected end. They were all to raise one's own personal status and to entrench oneself by the humiliation of one's fellows. A girl's adolescence among the Nootka was an event for which her father gathered property from the time she was first able to run about. When she was adolescent he would demonstrate his greatness by an unheard of distribution of these goods,

and put down all his rivals. It was not as a fact of the girl's sex life that it figured in their culture, but as the occasion for a major move in the great game of vindicating one's own greatness and humiliating one's associates.

In their behavior at great bereavements this set of the culture comes out most strongly. Among the Kwakiutl it did not matter whether a relative had died in bed of disease, or by the hand of an enemy, in either case death was an affront to be wiped out by the death of another person. The fact that one had been caused to mourn was proof that one had been put upon. A chief's sister and her daughter had gone up to Victoria, and either because they drank bad whiskey or because their boat capsized they never came back. The chief called together his warriors. "Now I ask you, tribes, who shall wail? Shall I do it or shall another?" The spokesman answered, of course, "Not you, Chief. Let some other of the tribes." Immediately they set up the war pole to announce their intention of wiping out the injury, and gathered a war party. They set out, and found seven men and two children asleep and killed them. "Then they felt good when they arrived at Sebaa in the evening."

The point which is of interest to us is that in our society those who on that occasion would feel good when they arrived at Sebaa that evening would be the definitely abnormal. There would be some, even in our society, but it is not a recognized and approved mood under the circumstances. On the Northwest Coast those are favored and fortunate to whom that mood under those circumstances is congenial, and those to whom it is repugnant are unlucky. This latter minority can register in their own culture only by doing violence to their congenial responses and acquiring others that are difficult for them. The person, for instance, who, like a Plains Indian whose wife has been taken from him, is too proud to fight, can deal with the Northwest Coast civilization only by ignoring its strongest bents. If he cannot achieve it, he is the deviant in that culture, their instance of abnormality.

This head-hunting that takes place on the Northwest Coast after a death is no matter of blood revenge or of organized vengeance. There is no effort to tie up the subsequent killing with any responsibility on the part of the victim for the death of the person who is being mourned. A chief whose son has died goes visiting wherever his fancy dictates, and he says to his host, "My prince has died today, and you go with him." Then he kills him. In this, according to their interpretation, he acts nobly because he has not been downed. He has thrust back in return. The whole procedure is meaningless without the fundamental paranoid reading of bereavement. Death, like all the other untoward accidents of existence, confounds man's pride and can only be handled in the category of insults.

Behavior honored upon the Northwest Coast is one which is recog-

nized as abnormal in our civilization, and yet it is sufficiently close to the attitudes of our own culture to be intelligible to us and to have a definite vocabulary with which we may discuss it. The megalomaniac paranoid trend is a definite danger in our society. It is encouraged by some of our major preoccupations, and it confronts us with a choice of two possible attitudes. One is to brand it as abnormal and reprehensible, and is the attitude we have chosen in our civilization. The other is to make it an essential attribute of ideal man, and this is the solution in the culture of the Northwest Coast.

These illustrations, which it has been possible to indicate only in the briefest manner, force upon us the fact that normality is culturally defined. An adult shaped to the drives and standards of either of these cultures, if he were transported into our civilization, would fall into our categories of abnormality. He would be faced with the psychic dilemmas of the socially unavailable. In his own culture, however, he is the pillar of society, the end result of socially inculcated mores, and the problem of personal instability in his case simply does not arise.

No one civilization can possibly utilize in its mores the whole potential range of human behavior. Just as there are great numbers of possible phonetic articulations, and the possibility of language depends on a selection and standardization of a few of these in order that speech communication may be possible at all, so the possibility of organized behavior of every sort, from the fashions of local dress and houses to the dicta of a people's ethics and religion, depends upon a similar selection among the possible behavior traits. In the field of recognized economic obligations or sex tabus this selection is as nonrational and subconscious a process as it is in the field of phonetics. It is a process which goes on in the group for long periods of time and is historically conditioned by innumerable accidents of isolation or of contact of peoples. In any comprehensive study of psychology, the selection that different cultures have made in the course of history within the great circumference of potential behavior is of great significance.

Every society, beginning with some slight inclination in one direction or another, carries its preference farther and farther, integrating itself more and more completely upon its chosen basis, and discarding those types of behavior that are uncongenial. Most of those organizations of personality that seem to us most incontrovertibly abnormal have been used by different civilizations in the very foundations of their institutional life. Conversely the most valued traits of our normal individuals have been looked on in differently organized cultures as aberrant. Normality, in short, within a very wide range, is culturally defined. It is primarily a term for the socially elaborated segment of human behavior in any culture; and abnormality, a term for the segment that that parti-

cular civilization does not use. The very eyes with which we see the problem are conditioned by the long traditional habits of our own society.

It is a point that has been made more often in relation to ethics than in relation to psychiatry. We do not any longer make the mistake of deriving the morality of our own locality and decade directly from the inevitable constitution of human nature. We do not elevate it to the dignity of a first principle. We recognize that morality differs in every society, and is a convenient term for socially approved habits. Mankind has always preferred to say, "It is a morally good," rather than "It is habitual," and the fact of this preference is matter enough for a critical science of ethics. But historically the two phrases are synonymous.

The concept of the normal is properly a variant of the concept of the good. It is that which society has approved. A normal action is one which falls well within the limits of expected behavior for a particular society. Its variability among different peoples is essentially a function of the variability of the behavior patterns that different societies have created for themselves, and can never be wholly divorced from a consideration of culturally institutionalized types of behavior.

Each culture is a more or less elaborate working-out of the potentialities of the segment it has chosen. In so far as a civilization is well integrated and consistent within itself, it will tend to carry farther and farther, according to its nature, its initial impulse toward a particular type of action, and from the point of view of any other culture those elaborations will include more and more extreme and aberrant traits.

Each of these traits, in proportion as it reinforces the chosen behavior patterns of that culture, is for that culture normal. Those individuals to whom it is congenial either congenitally, or as the result of childhood sets, are accorded prestige in that culture, and are not visited with the social contempt or disapproval which their traits would call down upon them in a society that was differently organized. On the other hand, those individuals whose characteristics are not congenial to the selected type of human behavior in that community are the deviants, no matter how valued their personality traits may be in a contrasted civilization.

The Dobuan who is not easily susceptible to fear of treachery, who enjoys work and likes to be helpful, is their neurotic and regarded as silly. On the Northwest Coast the person who finds it difficult to read life in terms of an insult contest will be the person upon whom fall all the difficulties of the culturally unprovided for. The person who does not find it easy to humiliate a neighbor, nor to see humiliation in his own experience, who is genial and loving, may, of course, find some unstandardized way of achieving satisfactions in his society, but not in the major patterned responses that his culture requires of him. If he is born to

play an important rôle in a family with many hereditary privileges, he can succeed only by doing violence to his whole personality. If he does not succeed, he has betrayed his culture; that is, he is abnormal.

I have spoken of individuals as having sets toward certain types of behavior, and of these sets as running sometimes counter to the types of behavior which are institutionalized in the culture to which they belong. From all that we know of contrasting cultures it seems clear that differences of temperament occur in every society. The matter has never been made the subject of investigation, but from the available material it would appear that these temperament types are very likely of universal recurrence. That is, there is an ascertainable range of human behavior that is found wherever a sufficiently large series of individuals is observed. But the proportion in which behavior types stand to one another in different societies is not universal. The vast majority of the individuals in any group are shaped to the fashion of that culture. In other words, most individuals are plastic to the moulding force of the society into which they are born. In a society that values trance, as in India, they will have supernormal experience. In a society that institutionalizes homosexuality, they will be homosexual. In a society that sets the gathering of possessions as the chief human objective, they will amass property. The deviants, whatever the type of behavior the culture has institutionalized, will remain few in number, and there seems no more difficulty in moulding the vast malleable majority to the "normality" of what we consider an aberrant trait, such as delusions of reference, than to the normality of such accepted behavior patterns as acquisitiveness. The small proportion of the number of the deviants in any culture is not a function of the sure instinct with which that society has built itself upon the fundamental sanities, but of the universal fact that, happily, the majority of mankind quite readily take any shape that is presented to them.

The relativity of normality is not an academic issue. In the first place, it suggests that the apparent weakness of the aberrant is most often and in great measure illusory. It springs not from the fact that he is lacking in necessary vigor, but that he is an individual upon whom that culture has put more than the usual strain. His inability to adapt himself to society is a reflection of the fact that that adaptation involves a conflict in him that it does not in the so-called normal.

Therapeutically, it suggests that the inculcation of tolerance and appreciation in any society toward its less usual types is fundamentally important in successful mental hygiene. The complement of this tolerance, on the patient's side, is an education in self-reliance and honesty with himself. If he can be brought to realize that what has thrust him into his misery is despair at his lack of social backing he may be able to achieve a more independent and less tortured attitude and lay the foundation for an adequately functioning mode of existence.

There is a further corollary. From the point of view of absolute categories of abnormal psychology, we must expect in any culture to find a large proportion of the most extreme abnormal types among those who from the local point of view are farthest from belonging to this category. The culture, according to its major preoccupations, will increase and intensify hysterical, epileptic, or paranoid symptoms, at the same time relying socially in a greater and greater degree upon these very individuals. Western civilization allows and culturally honors gratifications of the ego which according to any absolute category would be regarded as abnormal. The portrayal of unbridled and arrogant egoists as family men, as officers of the law, and in business has been a favorite topic of novelists, and they are familiar in every community. Such individuals are probably mentally warped to a greater degree than many inmates of our institutions who are nevertheless socially unavailable. They are extreme types of those personality configurations which our civilization fosters.

This consideration throws into great prominence the confusion that follows, on the one hand, the use of social inadequacy as a criterion of abnormality and, on the other, of definite fixed symptoms. The confusion is present in practically all discussions of abnormal psychology, and it can be clarified chiefly by adequate consideration of the character of the culture, not of the constitution of the abnormal individual. Nevertheless, the bearing of social security upon the total situation of the abnormal cannot be exaggerated, and the study of comparative psychiatry will be fundamentally concerned with this aspect of the matter.

It is clear that statistical methods of defining normality, so long as they are based on studies in a selected civilization, only involve us, unless they are checked against the cultural configuration, in deeper and deeper provincialism. The recent tendency in abnormal psychology to take the laboratory mode as normal and to define abnormalities as they depart from this average has value in so far as it indicates that the aberrants in any culture are those individuals who are liable to serious disturbances because their habits are culturally unsupported. On the other hand, it overlooks the fact that every culture besides its abnormals of conflict has presumably its abnormals of extreme fulfillment of the cultural type. From the point of view of a universally valid abnormal psychology the extreme types of abnormality would probably be found in this very group—a group which in every study based upon one culture goes undescribed except in its end institutionalized forms.

The relativity of normality is important in what may some day come to be a true social engineering. Our picture of our own civilization is no longer in this generation in terms of a changeless and divinely derived set of categorical imperatives. We must face the problems our changed perspective has put upon us. In this matter of mental ailments, we must

face the fact that even our normality is man-made, and is of our own seeking. Just as we have been handicapped in dealing with ethical problems so long as we held to an absolute definition of morality, so too in dealing with the problems of abnormality we are handicapped so long as we identify our local normalities with the universal sanities. I have taken illustrations from different cultures, because the conclusions are most inescapable from the contrasts as they are presented in unlike social groups. But the major problem is not a consequence of the variability of the normal from culture to culture, but its variability from era to era. This variability in time we cannot escape if we would, and it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that we may be able to face this inevitable change with full understanding and deal with it rationally. No society has yet achieved self-conscious and critical analysis of its own normalities and attempted rationally to deal with its own social process of creating new normalities within its next generation. But the fact that it is unachieved is not therefore proof of its impossibility. It is a faint indication of how momentous it could be in human society.

There is another major factor in the cultural conditioning of abnormality. From the material that is available at the present time it seems a lesser factor than the one we have discussed. Nevertheless, disregard of its importance has led to many misconceptions. The particular forms of behavior to which unstable individuals of any group are liable are many of them matters of cultural patterning like any other behavior. It is for this obvious reason that the epidemic disorders of one continent or era are often rare or unreported from other parts of the world or other periods of history.

The baldest evidences of cultural patterning in the behavior of unstable individuals is in trance phenomena. The use to which such proclivities are put, the form their manifestations take, the things that are seen and felt in trance, are all culturally controlled. The tranced individual may come back with communications from the dead describing the minutiae of life in the hereafter, or he may visit the world of the unborn, or get information about lost objects in the camp, or experience cosmic unity, or acquire a life-long guardian spirit, or get information about coming events. Even in trance the individual holds strictly to the rules and expectations of his culture, and his experience is as locally patterned as a marriage rite or an economic exchange.

The conformity of trance experience to the expectations of waking life is well recognized. Now that we are no longer confused by the attempt to ascribe supernormal validity to the one or the other, and realize how trance experience bodies forth the preoccupations of the experiencing individual, the cultural patterning in ecstasy has become an accepted tenet.

But the matter does not end here. It is not only what is seen in

trance experience that has clear-cut geographical and temporal distribution. It is equally true of forms of behavior which are affected by certain unstable individuals in any group. It is one of the prime difficulties in the use of such unprecise and casual information as we possess about the behavior of the unstable in different cultures, that the material does not correspond to data from our own society. It has even been thought that such definite types of instability as Arctic hysteria and the Malay running-amok were racial diseases. But we know at least, in spite of the lack of good psychiatric accounts, that these phenomena do not coincide with racial distributions. Moreover, the same problem is quite as striking in cases where there is no possibility of a racial correlation. Running amok has been described as alike in symptoms and alike in the treatment accorded it by the rest of the group from such different parts of the world as Melanesia and Tierra del Fuego.

The racial explanation is also ruled out of court in those instances of epidemic mania which are characteristic of our own cultural background. The dancing mania that filled the streets of Europe with compulsively dancing men, women, and children in mediaeval times is recognized as an extreme instance of suggestibility in our own racial group.

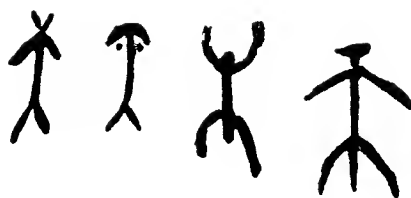
These behaviors are capable of controlled elaboration that is often carried to great lengths. Unstable individuals in one culture achieve characteristic forms that may be excessively rare or absent in another, and this is very marked where social value has been attached to one form or another. Thus when some form of borderline behavior has been associated in any society with the shaman and he is a person of authority and influence, it is this particular indicated seizure to which he will be liable at every demonstration. Among the Shasta of California, as we have seen, and among many other tribes in various parts of the world, some form of cataleptic seizure is the passport to shamanism and must constantly accompany its practice. In other regions it is automatic vision or audition. In other societies behavior is perhaps closest to what we cover by the term hystero-epilepsy. In Siberia all the familiar characteristics of our spiritualistic seances are required for every performance of the shaman. In all these cases the particular experience that is thus socially chosen receives considerable elaboration and is usually patterned in detail according to local standards. That is, each culture, though it chooses quite narrowly in the great field of borderline experiences, without difficulty imposes its selected type upon certain of its individuals. The particular behavior of an unstable individual in these instances is not the single and inevitable mode in which his abnormality could express itself. He has taken up a traditionally conditioned pattern of behavior in this as in any other field. Conversely, in every society, our own included, there are forms of instability that are out of fashion. They are not at the present time at least being presented for imitation to the



enormously suggestible individuals who constitute in any society a considerable group of the abnormals. It seems clear that this is no matter of the nature of sanity, or even of a biological, inherited tendency in a local group, but quite simply an affair of social patterning.

The problem of understanding abnormal human behavior in any absolute sense independent of cultural factors is still far in the future. The categories of borderline behavior which we derive from the study of the neuroses and psychoses of our civilization are categories of prevailing local types of instability. They give much information about the stresses and strains of Western civilization, but no final picture of inevitable human behavior. Any conclusions about such behavior must await the collection by trained observers of psychiatric data from other cultures. Since no adequate work of the kind has been done at the present time, it is impossible to say what core of definition of abnormality may be found valid from the comparative material. It is as it is in ethics: all our local conventions of moral behavior and of immoral are without absolute validity, and yet it is quite possible that a modicum of what is considered right and what wrong could be disentangled that is shared by the whole human race. When data are available in psychiatry, this minimum definition of abnormal human tendencies will be probably quite unlike our culturally conditioned, highly elaborated psychoses such as those that are described, for instance, under the terms of schizophrenia and manic-depressive.

## 48 The Cultural Distribution of Personality Characteristics



Anthony F. C. Wallace

IN THE PLACE OF THE PRESENT SELECTION IN THE FIRST EDITION OF THE Readings, there appeared "*A Critique of Cultural-Personality Writings*," by R. A. Lindesmith and Anselm Strauss. Critically excellent, that article tended to be unrelievedly negative and reflected the events and approaches of two and more decades ago. The Wallace essay is no less critical of the literature of the field; indeed, in some respects Wallace's comments are sharper and more explicit. But Wallace has in mind a positive goal and he uses his article to further constructive views of his own.

Of particular interest is his insistence that cultures need not be homogenized, thoroughly integrated systems. He insists on constructing models of cultures as "organizations of diversity," while recognizing parallel cultural drives toward "the replication of uniformities." The latter point enables him to maintain a dialogue with more traditionally oriented scholars, while his insistence on the former places him in the mainstream of the most recent approaches. Implicit and sometimes even explicit in his argument are telling criticisms of the views of Benedict

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*and Mead (II:47 and 49), yet Wallace does not always depart from what they have done. Like other branches of anthropology, culture and personality has conflicts and disputes, but few if any would question its importance or the significance of the questions raised within it.*

In this chapter, we deal with the aspect of culture-and-personality studies that has produced the bulk of the literature in the field. For many people, indeed, this aspect *is* culture-and-personality. But because of certain conceptual ambiguities, which have given rise to fruitless controversy and tautology, culture-and-personality studies have reached, in this area, something of an impasse. We shall attempt to clear away a part of the debris.

### *Replication Theory and Organization Theory*

Elsewhere we distinguished two approaches to culture-and-personality, one emphasizing the replication of uniformities, and the other the organization of diversity. Both approaches essay to explain the systems of interaction among individuals by saying something about what goes on inside them. For descriptive purposes serving only to delineate the preponderant characteristics of a group, particularly in comparing them with some other group (e.g., in comparing one tribe with another, or one generation with another), the replication-of-uniformity approach is convenient and serviceable. But for the purpose of developing empirical support of theoretical analysis of the relation of socio-cultural and personality systems, the organization-of-diversity approach is essential. And contrawise, in such contexts the replication-of-uniformity approach is misleading.

One extreme formulation of the replication approach is so nearly tautological as to make empirical investigation unnecessary. This is the microcosmic metaphor. It takes many forms, but they convey in common the proposition that inside the head of "the \_\_\_\_\_" (adjectival form of name of group inserted here) is a little replica of his group's culture, systematically transformed, point for point, to fit neural tissue, which he has "internalized." This replica is "the \_\_\_\_\_" personality. With some such formula in mind, it has been asserted, for example by Margaret Mead, that "all culture and personality studies . . . are focused on the way human beings embody the culture they have been reared in, or to which they have immigrated." To a few persons, in every group, of course, the formula does not apply; these few may be called "deviants." Such deviants excluded, the metaphor implies, first of all, a conformity of all personalities within a given culture-bearing (or sub-culture-bearing) group to a single personality type; second, it implies a perfect association between culture type and personality type. From the

latter assumption, accordingly, inference can supposedly proceed in two ways: culture can be deduced from personality, and personality can be deduced from culture. The process by which the internalization is accomplished is the process of child development as it is phrased in the given culture.

The confusions produced by attempting to interpret empirical data from the standpoint of the microcosmic metaphor are well exemplified in a famous analysis of Alorese personality materials. The psychoanalytic consultant, working with field data brought back by the anthropologist, assumes that all Alorese share a basic personality structure because all have been exposed to the same cultural influences. But he also finds empirically that each of the four males, from whom autobiographical and dream material were secured, is a "highly individual character." "Each has some features of the basic personality structure, but each in turn is molded by the specific factors in his individual fate." The analyst, in fact, has great trouble in relating the character structures of his four males to any basic personality norm. Thus, on initial presentation, he observes, "It is difficult to decide how typical Mangma is. I would venture to say that if he were typical, the society could not continue to exist." Yet, later he asserts, "Mangma is the most typical, and his character corresponds to the basic personality structure." Rilpada, a second male, is "atypical" because he is passive and has a strong super-ego, owing to a good maternal care and a powerful father. (The typical male Alorese super-ego is "of necessity" weak.) Fantan, a third, has "the strongest character formation, devoid of inhibitions toward women." Fantan "differs from the other men . . . as much as a city slicker differs from a farmer." (The basic personality structure "for males," as the analyst defines it, is extremely inhibited in regard to heterosexuality: "the approach to the woman is filled with shyness and anxiety.") Malelaka is likewise difficult to evaluate. The analyst says, "His life history is in every way typical." This is remarkable, because Malelaka was a notorious prophet who attempted to launch a religious revival. On the other hand, he is said to be similar to Rilpada, another seer, who in turn was described as "atypical." And to complicate things still further, the analyst says that "characters such as Mangma, Rilpada, and Fantan can be found in any society."

The microcosmic metaphor is generally invoked in the cultural deductive method, which involves subjecting ethnological description to psychological analysis. In this method, the anthropologist's, historian's, or folklorist's accounts of myth and legend, religious ritual, economic relations, and so forth, are "interpreted" according to some schema, usually psychoanalytic, which treats these behaviors as if they were the neurotic productions of a single individual. This has been the particular interest of those culturological psychoanalysts who deduce from the

cultural materials, with the help of psychoanalytic theory, the "meaning" of various institutions to the individual member of the society. Criticism of this procedure has sometimes been savage, since the interpretations themselves at times seem to be arbitrary, if not farfetched, and demonstration that they are validly attributable to all, or even more than a few members of the society, is invariably lacking. *Ad hominem* argument may even displace rational discussion between antagonists in such discussions!

Rational criticisms of the microcosmic metaphor would seem to fall into three categories: (1) that the metaphor implies a false equivalence between concepts on different levels of abstraction (e.g., a personality is no more an embodiment of the culture than a baby is an embodiment of the birth rate); (2) that the metaphor is simplistic (there is far greater variability in personal characteristics than can be accounted for by the formulas); (3) that there is no reason to suppose that social organization requires a high degree of personal conformity to universalistic norms (e.g., the relations between males and females depend not on mutual conformity to one role, but on a complementarity of different roles).

Rational defenses of the microcosmic position have, however, been vigorous. Most of its proponents admit freely that every individual, even in the most uniformitarian society, is somewhat different from every other, as a result of the interplay of various genetic factors and the accidents of experience. But this diversity, as it is described, reminds one of the "diversity" of houses in a new development: the paint is of different colors, and the roof-line rotates from house to house through a ninety-degree arc, but the floor plans are all the same. In other words, the dynamically important features are assumed to be the ones which are shared. Thus, despite lip service to individual variations, the notion of "statistical" distribution is still resisted. Margaret Mead, for instance, has insisted that descriptions of individual characteristics and of cultural setting be so precise that perfect co-variation is obtainable between them. "Any member of a group, provided that his position within that group is properly specified, is a perfect sample of the group-wide pattern on which he is acting as an informant. . . . Any cultural statement must be made in such a way that the addition of another class of informants previously unrepresented will not change the nature of the statement in a way which has not been allowed for in the original statement." But assertions that one component is a "perfect sample" of a pattern, once the component's relations to the other components have been specified, means no more than saying that one bead is a perfect sample of a wampum belt, if one already has the wampum belt in one's hand. The question of distribution has simply been begged by sampling other informants to specify the "sample" informant's "position."

But, while the "cultural sampling" defense is logically weak, it is

related to another proposition which has merit of its own, independent of its status in this argument (in which it is both a strong and a weak defense). This defense is the notion of "pattern" itself. "Pattern" has at least two senses in culture-and-personality writing: a sense in which it is a synchronic complex common to diverse representations, and a sense in which it is a diachronic complex common to diverse sequences. A pattern is, of course, a class of phenomena susceptible of many sub-classes, which in themselves are of interest; but its identity as a recognizable class cannot be questioned merely because it contains sub-classes. The strength of the pattern concept, as a defense of the microcosmic view, is that the existence of a pattern cannot be properly denied, merely by insistence on differentiating and counting the frequencies of its sub-classes. Its weakness is the weakness of the old comparative method: the analyst, only too easily, can take a piece from here, a shred from there, and relate them intuitively, by such methods as "end linkage" and "resonance" analysis, in a pattern whose locus rests undefined. The old cultural evolutionists, as has often been said, would take a custom from this tribe, and a legend from that, and by patiently fitting together such bits and pieces, would construct a culture pattern (a "stage" of cultural evolution) which may never have existed anywhere, and certainly was not a part of the heritage of all known cultures. The pattern analysts in culture-and-personality are prone to take a childhood memory from this informant, a neurotic phobia from that, the theme from a movie, and the history of an international incident and, by skillful maneuvering of the pieces, produce a "pattern" which is discoverable in no one individual but is attributable to all. The deficiency in this procedure springs not from any lack of comprehensiveness of the observations on which it is based, nor from any lack of reliability in the processes of combining elements to form patterns, but in the *non sequitur* by which such a pattern is ascribed to uninvestigated (and sometimes, as in the Alorese case, even to investigated) individuals en masse.

There exists a parallel tradition, stemming from Sapir and Hallowsell more than from Mead and Roheim, which partially avoids the pitfalls of the microcosmic metaphor by giving more emphasis to the uniqueness of the individual. Sapir was impressed by the fact that individual informants gave different information and that no one informant knew the whole culture. "Two Crows denies this," meant, for Sapir, that Two Crows "had" a different culture, and probably a correspondingly different personality, from the other informant. Spiro similarly has emphasized the uniqueness of private family and individual cultures, each as the product of a particular history of social interaction of the individuals being considered. But the logical consequence of this line of reasoning is another impasse: even though individual differences are more fully recognized, culture again becomes merely the subjective micro-

cosm of personality, a distinction between the two is a "false dichotomy," and we are back where we started, with culture and personality paired off as equivalent constructs.

An alternative is the organizational theory. According to this viewpoint, no population, within a stated cultural boundary, can be *assumed* to be uniform with respect to any variable or pattern. (For example, it cannot be *assumed* that males and females share the same values, the same role cognitions, the same emotional structure.) In every instance, a distribution will be found to characterize the sample. Personality is not assumed to be an internalization of the culture, and culture is not conceptualized as a constant environment, or projection, of all members of the society. Both personality descriptions and cultural descriptions are considered to be intuitive or formal abstractions by an observer from maze-way descriptions of individuals. Individual personality constructs are generalizations about one individual's maze-way over time; cultural constructs are generalizations and syntheses of behavior which is shared by, and/or produced by, groups. Modal personality and national character are abstractions from personality and cultural data respectively. There is no finite list of categories which define personality, nor any specified number or proportion of individuals who must share behavior for it to be called "culture." Descriptions of culture will include statements of relations between behavior patterns which no informant has given or is able to give: cultural descriptions need not be "psychologically real" to the informant.

The consequences for theory and for empirical study of taking the microcosmic or the organizational viewpoint are large, and it is this fact which makes discussion of the problem important. If the microcosmic view is adopted, then research is not necessary to demonstrate that co-variation between personality and culture is exact (given constant "genetic factors"); this is regarded as true by definition. The problem becomes essentially one of child development: *how* does the child come to "embody" his culture? Hence, many of those who take the microcosmic view are pre-eminently interested in child training, education, and so forth. If the organizational view is adopted, however, then the problem of greater interest is the processes by which individually diverse organisms work to maintain, increase, or restore quantity of organization within their own psychological systems and within socio-cultural and physical systems of which they are components. Child development remains a significant problem, but is no longer to be considered as the only focal one. Statements about "the —————" and his cultural and personal characteristics may still be made, but they are now understood as conveniently brief expressions for more cumbersome formulations specifying sub-group membership and relative frequency.

### *Synchronic Distributions*

Synchronic distributional studies of personality attempt to answer the question: At a given point in time, what is the frequency distribution of certain personal characteristics in a certain class of persons? "Class of person" is defined by the possession, by *all* the persons in the class, of some property in common: a nationality ("Japanese"), a race ("Mongoloid"), a region ("the southern United States"), an age group ("persons over sixty-five"), a civilization ("Western culture"), a culture area ("the Plains Indians"), a social class ("the bourgeoisie"), an ethnic group ("second generation Italian-Americans"), a religion ("conservative Judaism"), an economic status ("families with an average yearly income of less than 2000 dollars"), an occupation ("waiters"), a sex ("female"), a tribe ("the Ojibwa"), a community ("Plainville, U.S.A."), or, in fact any one or combination of an indefinitely large number of possible properties. Many of these class-defining properties are non-cultural (e.g., "age"), but since all are likely to be related to variation in cultural systems, they are met with in culture-and-personality studies.

The panel of personal characteristics used in culture-and-personality studies is as large as the panel of classes. The psychology of personality has yielded many systems, concepts, and measurement devices. These various schemata do not claim exclusive validity; rather, they are relevant and appropriate to different practical purposes and operational situations. But all have in common, at least, a connotation of concern with that structure of relatively abstract values, and their means of achievement, that is maintained by an individual over a protracted time. We may classify them with respect to the technique of investigation (projective test, depth interview, galvanic skin response, free association, questionnaire, etc.), or analytical schema (authoritarian vs. democratic, introversion vs. extroversion, the psychoanalytic dynamic characterology, and so forth). Within anthropology, perhaps the most commonly employed analytical frames have been the following: *genius* (as of a culture or civilization), world view, ethos, themes, values, national character, basic personality structure, and modal personality structure. Technically, some of these are largely constructed by abstraction from individual personality descriptions, and others by deduction from cultural descriptions. Some emphasize cognitive positions (beliefs); others, affective orientation (emotional tone) and motivation. Now let us briefly discuss each analytical frame separately.

#### GENIUS

Most abstract and least affective in content is a set of psychological characteristics, usually inferred from cultural data, which may, for want



of a better term, be labeled "genius," in the sense connoted by such expressions as "the genius of Greek civilization." It is probably in psycholinguistics, following the tradition set by Sapir and Whorf, that the theory behind this approach is most rigorously developed; but Kroeber, Spengler, Toynbee, and other philosophers of history have been concerned to capture its essential theme. The genius of a people has both a continuous and an evolutionary aspect. Its continuity is provided by the constant presence, throughout an extended historical process, of a definite frame of reference that provides certain primitive categories into which experience can be coded, and defines the kinds of relationships which conceivably can exist between such categories. Thus, it functions (in theory at least) as a set of parameters or rules governing mental operations. In this sense, genius can be compared to the primitive predicates, operators, and axioms of a logical calculus; once established, only certain propositional functions can be constructed; indeed, only a finite number of these functions is possible. In its evolutionary sense, the genius of a people is the plot or program which is displayed in its history: the unfolding, over centuries or millennia, of the inner potentialities of the primitive cultural axioms. Here again, the comparison to a logical calculus is apt, for the plot of a culture unfolds in a way comparable to the gradual unfolding, in logical and mathematical discovery and proof, of new theorems, each of which serves as the basis for further cumulative synthesis. Thus, genius is like a geometry, being expressible both in its primitive axiomatics and in the historical process of theorem development. Ultimately, of course, an end may be reached, when the genius has fulfilled its destiny, and a phase of sterility ending in "death" supervenes.

Thus, the concept of genius often has both a mystical, fatalistic quality, best expressed by philosophers of history such as Spengler, and a hard and logical quality, voiced by psycholinguists such as Whorf and by culturologists such as Kroeber and White. It is both the "soul" of the super-organic and the phonemics, lexicon, and syntax of culture, depending on the use to which the concept is being put.

Examples of descriptions of genius, in its continuous and evolutionary aspects, will make the concept clear. Whorf, for instance, describes certain features of the genius of the Hopi in their continuous aspects. He derives his data from an intensive examination of the Hopi language:

After long and careful study and analysis, the Hopi language is seen to contain no words, grammatical forms, constructions or expressions that refer directly to what we call "time," or to past, present, or future, or to enduring or lasting, or to motion as kinematic rather than dynamic (i.e., as a continuous translation in space and time rather than as an exhibition of dynamic effort in

a certain process), or that even refer to space in such a way as to exclude that element of extension or existence that we call "time," and so by implication leave a residue that could be referred to as "time." Hence, the Hopi language contains no reference to "time," either explicit or implicit.

At the same time, the Hopi language is capable of accounting for and describing correctly, in a pragmatic or operational sense, all observable phenomena of the universe. . . . Just as it is possible to have any number of geometries other than the Euclidean which give an equally perfect account of space configurations, so it is possible to have descriptions of the universe, all equally valid, that do not contain our familiar contrasts of time and space. The relativity viewpoint of modern physics is one such view, conceived in mathematical terms, and the Hopi *Weltanschauung* is another and quite different one, nonmathematical and linguistic. . . .

The analysis of Whorf's, and comparable exercises by other psycholinguists, were explicitly recognized by Whorf as an approach to understanding psychological processes. As Whorf put it:

. . . linguistics is essentially the quest of MEANING. It may seem to the outsider to be inordinately absorbed in recording hair-splitting distinctions of sound, performing phonetic gymnastics, and writing complex grammars which only grammarians read. But the simple fact is that its real concern is to light up the thick darkness of the language, and thereby of much of the thought, the culture, and the outlook upon life of a given community, with the light of this "golden something," as I have heard it called, this transmuting principle of meaning. As I have tried to show, this amounts to far more than learning to speak and understand the language as the practical language teacher conceives these ends. The investigator of culture should hold an ideal of linguistics as that of a heuristic approach to problems of psychology which hitherto he may have shrunk from considering—a glass through which, when correctly focused, will appear the TRUE SHAPES of many of those forces which hitherto have been to him but the inscrutable blank of invisible and bodiless thought.

From this point of view, therefore, linguistics becomes a method for investigating what may be termed the semantic geometry of culture. It may be doubted whether structural linguistics per se is fully equipped to conduct such investigations; but such further, semantically directed, procedures as are offered by componential analysis, in combination with lexical and grammatical analysis *a la* Whorf, can make rigorous investigation possible.

In the evolutionary sense, genius is the program of development of a logical system: the successive working out of the theorems, as it were, which are implied by the axioms of the semantic geometry. Kroeber, in his study *Configurations of Culture Growth* (1944), in his outline of native North American culture areas (1939), and in various other places,

has pointed out that the histories of cultures display a characteristic sequence of rise, climax, and fatigue. He suggests that this sequence is the program of the working out of the "logical possibilities" of particular "styles" or "patterns." The analysis of the development of Greek mathematics is typical:

We have seen that Greek science and mathematics came in a four-century spurt and then stood still. The Greeks never did achieve much in simple arithmetic, probably partly because their method of writing quantities—by letter symbols denoting certain specific numbers instead of by position numerals—made ordinary computations of any size difficult. Even less was accomplished by them in algebra, of which the imperfect rudiments began—or first appear to our view—some four hundred years after Greek general mathematical progress had stopped. The branch of mathematics the Greeks did wholly originate and develop was geometry—plane, solid, and spherical. Here they substantially "exhausted the pattern," fulfilled its possibilities, and left nothing for others to discover. Now geometry is a special way of doing mathematics—with a compass and rule and nothing more, the Greeks insisted. It visualizes properties and relations; it can be pictured, as algebra and arithmetic cannot be. Although already truly abstract, geometry easily retains the most concrete aspect of all branches of mathematics. This geometric approach was the Greek "style" in mathematics. One part of the style was the Greek emphasis on proportion, which can also be diagramed; and the Greek avoidance, where possible, of all but integral numbers, which can be handled like visible and tangible blocks; and the avoidance also of negative quantities and irrational fractions, which cannot be handled in this way. On the positive side, again, the Greeks pushed on from their geometry into conic sections—dealing with plane cuts across cones, resulting in curves such as ellipses, parabolas, hyperbolas. This is a branch of mathematics which we still call by the original name of "conic sections," although we mostly express its concepts algebraically now. The further limitations of the mathematical style of the Greeks are shown by their failure to develop anything at all in the field of logarithms, analytical geometry, calculus, or the concept of function. What they could do with their geometrical and whole-numbered manner of style, they achieved. Other mathematical possibilities, like these mentioned, were simply left to be realized by other peoples and times—chiefly by western Europeans in the last three or four centuries.

Kroeber's type of analysis applies equally well to other categories of culture and, indeed, to the "style" (or genius) of whole civilizations.

In sum, then, we can define the "genius" of a population as a set of highly generalized primitive concepts and axioms which serve as the frame of reference for a whole society (or, at least, a large portion thereof). These axioms may, themselves, not be consciously recognized by their holders and, in general, may be abstracted from cultural or psychological data. They imply the program of possible cultural evolution and thus set limits on possible cultural development by the population which entertains them.

## WORLD VIEW

Still predominantly cognitive, but more concrete in reference to observable things, is world view. The concept of world view has been most effectively developed by Robert Redfield and others associated with him. It primarily refers to cognitive content, some of which may be affectively neutral, and is derived by abstraction from ethnographic description. Redfield defines world view as that outlook upon the universe which is characteristic of a people:

"World view" differs from culture, ethos, mode of thought, and national character. It is the picture the members of a society have of the properties and characters upon their stage of action. While "national character" refers to the way these people look to the outsider looking in on them, "world view" refers to the way the world looks to that people looking out. Of all that is connoted by "culture," "world view" attends especially to the way a man, in a particular society, sees himself in relation to all else. It is the properties of existence as distinguished from and related to the self. It is, in short, a man's idea of the universe. It is that organization of ideas which answers to a man the questions: Where am I? Among what do I move? What are my relations to these things?

But Redfield does not really mean *any* existential belief; he is referring to broad classes of such beliefs. Thus, it is very similar to the concept of "implicit dominant ontology," which refers to the major assumptions about the existential nature of the world that are held by a population, and to "cosmology" which may be conceived as a systematized world view. Redfield regards some categories of world view as psychic universals: belief in a division of things into those that are self and those that are non-self; in a division of the latter into human, non-human but material, and supernatural; in distinctions between earth and sky, day and night, birth and death, etc. Among the multitude of world views which the anthropologist may observe, Redfield pays particular attention to one kind: the primitive world view, said to be characterized by three major assertions: (1) that the distinction between the self and that which the self confronts is blurred, so that man tends to see himself as united with nature, rather than standing apart from it; (2) that man participates in maintaining this unitary system of man-in-nature, rather than dominates or changes it; (3) that the universe is morally significant, because all of nature is animate and hence man's relationship with nature, like all social relationships, must be moral.

Other scholars, of course, have dealt with comparable concepts in contrasting primitive and civilized, folk and urban, provincial and cosmopolitan, and so forth. When Cassirer describes the "mythopoeic personality" of the primitive; when Hallowell discusses time and space orientation among the Ojibwa; when Wallis, Lowith, and Bury consider

concepts of eschatology and progress; when Weber analyzes the Protestant ethic; when Mannheim discusses ideologies and utopias, each is dealing with world view.

Mention of Mannheim must turn the reader's attention to the traditional interest of Continental sociologists in the sociology of knowledge. The essential theme of Mannheim's work is thoroughly at home in anthropological theory: that the whole fabric of institutions of a society must be intimately related to the dominant system of existential belief which, in turn, not merely rationalizes, but springs naturally from the exigencies of functional organization. Thus, a world view is not merely a philosophical by-product of each culture, like a shadow, but the very skeleton of concrete cognitive assumptions on which the flesh of customary behavior is hung. World view, accordingly, may be expressed, more or less systematically in cosmology, philosophy, ethics, religious ritual, scientific belief, and so on, but it is implicit in almost every act. In Parsonian terms, it constitutes the set of cognitive orientations of the members of a society.

#### VALUES, ETHOS, AND THEMES

Something of value is something which an organism will work to experience. "Values" as such, however, as abstract entities, are rather difficult to define. In one sort of economic usage, "the value" of anything is, in a sense, an intangible property added to a raw, primitive material by a producer who performs work upon it and by a consumer who performs work to obtain it. The measure of this added value is a function of both the producer's and the consumer's work. In psychological, sociological, and anthropological usage, the "value" of a thing or a state of affairs is, somewhat comparably, its positive or negative valence, i.e., its relative potency as a goal ("reward," "punishment," "pleasure," "pain," etc.) toward which, or away from which, the organism strives. An object which has acquired psychological value is said to have been "cathected." Thus, the "value" of long life, or food pellets, or sexual satisfaction, or membership in a prestigious group, or whatever, can be stated as a quantity, or at least as a rank order, on a scale from minus- $x$  through zero to plus- $x$ . But "a value," in the sense of the term used by psychologists, anthropologists, and sociologists, means more than the cathexis figuratively clinging, like a charge of positive or negative static electricity, to some object. First of all, "a value" refers not merely to the cathectic "charge," but also to that which bears the "charge"—the mental image, or the object itself, which is the goal ("consummatory values") and, sometimes, even to behavioral gambits which the organism may employ to approach or avoid it ("instrumental values"). Secondly, because "values" in the latter sense are closely related to ontology,

empirical descriptions of "values" tend to include descriptions of genius and world view. Finally, in anthropological usage, "the values" of a people, or a culture, are not really any and all object-cathexes, but only those which the anthropologist can show to be widely shared, to be considered "desirable," as well as merely "desired," and to pervade many different cultural categories: in a word, they are abstractions or logical types of very high order.

The concept of values sometimes appeals to social anthropologists who, for one reason or another, do not feel comfortable with personality psychology. In particular, as criticism of the uniformitarian implications of some national character studies has mounted, the concept of values has provided a kind of substitute. "Personality" may be variable, but are not the "values" of a people shared? And are not "values" somehow more impersonal, more structural, more clearly relevant to culture? Do not certain "values" organize the diversity of personalities in society?

The most extensive use of the concept of *values* by anthropologists has been made in Harvard University's Comparative Study of Values in Five Cultures (Navaho, Zuni, Mormon, Texan, and Spanish-American). The study works with broad values, such as "the harmony of the universe" (a positively valued state of affairs among the Navaho) and "individual independence" (a positively valued state among the Texans). A similar tradition has been maintained in the development of the Parsonian calculus, also at Harvard, but the Parsonian schema has emphasized the classification of these already broad abstractions into a componential taxonomy of value types. (For instance, a society's central values may be simply classified as "universalistic-achievement," or "particularistic-ascription," in character.) This kind of typology has a certain usefulness as a heuristic device; its justification as an analytical tool we shall discuss later.

The term *ethos* denotes one particular kind of "object" to which value is apt to be commonly attached by members of a society. That "object" is style of emotional experience, or as Honigsmann puts it, "the emotional quality of socially patterned behavior." The best-known example of the description of *ethos* is Ruth Benedict's famous *Patterns of Culture* (in which the word "pattern" is used to denote what we here call "ethos"). She contrasts two types of *ethos*, the Dionysian and the Apollonian:

The desire of the Dionysian, in personal experience or in ritual, is to press through it toward a certain psychological state, to achieve excess. The closest analogy to the emotions he seeks is drunkenness, and he values the illuminations of frenzy. With Blake, he believes, "the path of excess leads to the palace of wisdom." The Apollonian distrusts all this, and has often little idea of the nature of such experiences. He finds means to outlaw them from his conscious

life. He "knows but one law, measure in the Hellenic sense." He keeps the middle of the road, stays within the known map, does not meddle with disruptive psychological states. In Nietzsche's fine phrase, even in the exaltation of the dance he "remains what he is, and retains his civic name."

Other writers have dealt with such culturally valued and disvalued emotional states under a variety of terms: thus, for instance, Belo has alluded to the Balinese "temper," and Klineberg has reviewed attitudes toward emotion expressed in Chinese literature.

The concept of *themes* in culture, as developed by, among others, Morris Opler, is also a value-oriented concept. The themes of a culture are a finite list (a dozen, let us say) of propositions about what constitutes the good life, about what are the valid and enduring goals of a human existence, shared by the members of a group. In restricted form, thematic analysis has been extensively used in the study of literary productions: novels, plays, movies, myths, and artificial productions, such as the Thematic Apperception Test. Such themes describe, essentially, the familiar plots of a culture: those goals, positive and negative, together with their methods of achievement and avoidance, which are publicly recognized and intelligible to the audience. Thus, one can discern in the popular American "Western," whether short story, novel, movie, or television play, one ubiquitous theme: the proposition that good men, hard to find in this chaotic and lawless world, must fight and fight tirelessly against great odds to bring order to the community, but are sure to triumph and to receive sexual love and public approbation, if not material reward, if they do. This theme is also dominant in the "tough" genre of crime stories, where the "private eyes" are typically disillusioned idealists, lacking faith in the power structure of their society, who nonetheless do the right thing for their wronged clients. The Western and private-eye themes are different from the late nineteenth-century English "mystery," whose heroes emphasized the virtue of cleverness in logical deduction, rather than of well-intentioned brutality, accepted the rightness of the power structure, and tirelessly and politely worked to maintain order in an already well-ordered community. All three differ from the theme of the seventeenth-century English drama whose heroes are not concerned with the welfare of society, but with the gratification of private appetites in a community which is recognized to be hypocritical, corrupt, and exploitative.

Fundamentally, all the approaches that emphasize values—value studies per se, ethos, themes—postulate, in the maze of the individual, the existence of certain semantic parameters. One or the other of these parameters gives connotation to virtually all experience, but does not necessarily enter into the *explicit* definition of anything. They are the emotional counterparts of the semantic geometry and of the world view of a people. Every motive can theoretically be classified under the

heading of one or another value or theme, but the identity of these values is apt to emerge only after extensive coding and super-coding of the data of culture and of individual behavior.

#### NATIONAL CHARACTER AND BASIC PERSONALITY

The description of the national character of a people is apt to include statements about genius, world view, and values. What distinguishes national character as a concept is, first, its usual restriction to the citizens of modern, politically organized states; and, second and more important, its emphasis upon the articulation of a large number of components into a structure or pattern. (Pattern, in this sense, does not quite mean the same thing as it does in Benedict's usage. Benedict's "patterns" were, essentially, simple emotional elements found in most of the units of a cultural structure, comparable to the chromosomes found in most of the cells of a body. But the "pattern" of a national character structure is a set of intricate dynamic interrelationships among different units of a personality or character.) The kind of phenomenon to which national character refers is the same as that denoted by the phrase "basic personality." But basic personality is applicable to any culturally bounded group, whether tribe, nation, or culture area; and it has tended to connote a more thoroughgoing use of the psychoanalytic theory of personality. It is inconvenient to have to change terms according to political form, however, and awkward to use the adjective "national" to refer to any and all social groups. So, in this section, we shall use the term "basic personality," in order to have one phrase, whether the group be a small primitive tribe, a modern state, a culture area, or a whole civilization. In this usage, we also disavow partiality to any particular theoretical schema. Thus, basic personality, as we shall use the term, implies neither a particular type of social organization nor a particular theory of personality; it merely refers to a structure of articulated personality characteristics and processes attributable, non-statistically, to almost all members of some culturally bounded population.

In method, the basic personality approach primarily rests on the cultural deductive principle; that is to say, the analyst first prepares an ethnographic description and then infers, from the ethnographic data, the intra-psychoic structures of the members of the society. He feels able to do this because he is equipped with a complex, often psychoanalytic, theory which states equivalences between behavior (or experience) and motivation. Thus, knowledge of how children are toilet-trained, or how the dead are mourned, implies some knowledge of, respectively, consequent and antecedent motivational structures; this knowledge increases with the complexity of the description of the context of action. Furthermore, this theory requires the basic personality analyst to discriminate between peripheral and nuclear motives: nuclear motives



are both "basic" to psychodynamic structure and "universal" in the society. The analyst is interested primarily in nuclear motives. The relationship of nuclear motives is, generally speaking, considered to form a conflict-structure, with motives (and values) being paired off against one another, dialectically, with overt behavior representing some sort of compromise synthesis. The basic motivational structure is assumed to be learned, usually in infancy and early childhood; later experience, however, and especially stressful experience, may lead to the development, or use, of various institutionalized mechanisms. These defend the essential integrity of the structure by giving indirect gratification to the subordinate but rebellious motives.

An example of basic personality theory is Gorer's controversial swaddling hypothesis. Geoffrey Gorer, in discussing the Great Russians, suggested that Russian culture institutionalized extreme discipline and authoritarianism in human relations, but allowed periods of orgiastic license for creature indulgence and for destructiveness. This seemed to imply (by the cultural deductive method) a type of personality in which the ego feels a need for strong external restraints in order to satisfy the value placed on discipline and order, and to control the rebellious desire for freedom from restraint. This conflict structure, in Gorer's theory, was established in the infant (but was reinforced in many other later experiences) by the experience of prolonged tight swaddling, with occasional intervals of release during which the child kicked violently, while nurses watched anxiously, fearful lest the child injure himself and his freedom. As Mead points out, much of the criticism of Gorer's hypothesis is misdirected: Gorer did *not* say that Russians are incapable of freedom because they are swaddled as infants. Given the assumption that a common conflict structure exists in all Great Russians and that it is both the psychological equivalent of certain adult institutions and the product of certain series of infantile experiences, the hypothesis is rational. The appropriate criticism, if any, must apply to the assumptions.

This appropriate criticism is essentially that which applies to microcosmic theories in general. What is the evidence that all Great Russians do experience this conflict structure; that their adult institutions are the cultural equivalents of this uniform conflict structure; that their infantile experience is uniform; that their infantile experience determines their adult personalities? These questions anticipate further discussion; for the moment, however, we defer their consideration and go on to the closely related concept of modal personality.

#### MODAL PERSONALITY STRUCTURE

Basic personality is a non-statistical concept, emphasizing the importance of pattern and attempting to dispose of questions of frequency

by excluding "deviants" and "peripheral" traits, thus leaving a core structure which is supposedly common to all members of a group. The corresponding statistical construct is modal personality. Properly speaking, "modal" refers to that value of a variable which is most frequent in a distribution: it is conceptually, and often empirically, distinct from other measures of central tendency, such as the mean (average) and the median. But for simplicity's sake, in the following section we shall use "modal personality" loosely to denote any method which characterizes the personality typical of a culturally bounded population by the central tendency of a defined frequency distribution.

Cultural descriptions rarely are phrased in such a way that statistical distributions of personal characteristics can be deduced from them. Hence modal personality must, in most cases, be constructed from data other than an ethnographic report. Such data are most easily gathered by giving psychological tests to a sample of a culturally defined population; other devices, such as recording dreams, taking life histories, and recording the frequency of certain behaviors, are sometimes used, but they are more tedious and consequently more difficult to apply to adequately large numbers of people. Thus, modal personality has come to be associated with the various projective techniques: the Rorschach Test, the Thematic Apperception Test (both in its original form and in the various cultural modifications), the Stewart Emotional Response Test, and a number of others. There exists a considerable literature now on the cross-cultural use of projective techniques.

The peculiar weakness of the modal personality concept is complementary to the weakness of the basic personality concept. Basic personality has difficulty dealing with questions of frequency; modal personality has difficulty dealing with questions of structure and pattern. As we have seen, the basic personality theory uses the relationship of conflict to bind motives into elaborate homeostatic systems which are transformed over time, shifting and moving according to the pressures put upon them. Modal personality description can do as little as stating the central tendency of a frequency distribution of values of one variable, and must content itself at best with stating the frequency of certain combinations of values on several variables. Thus, for instance, Wallace was able to state that the modal type of personality, defined on twenty-one dimensions of observation in a certain Indian population, was shared by only 37 per cent of the sample tested. Such combinations, whether identified by simple techniques of correlation and association, or by factor analysis, or by the modal group technique described by Wallace, in themselves do not constitute a dynamic structure; they are essentially taxonomic structures. The dynamic structure (e.g., the conflict structure) represented by a particular combination of values (e.g., a Rorschach profile) must be deduced from a formal interpretive code.

Furthermore, many modal personality studies are vulnerable to statistical criticism of sample design, of choice of statistic, and of the justification of inference. A further corollary weakness of the statistical approach is that the method requires extreme selectivity. The richness of human experience is not savored, for the choice of a statistical tool usually means that only a few dimensions of behavior can be tapped and that these must be integrated into aridly abstract types.

Nevertheless, a statistical approach has the great virtue of making it possible (despite the common error of treating central tendencies as if they represented all the individual instances) to recognize the diversity of human characteristics within culturally bounded groups like tribes, nations, sex, age, status, class groups, and so on. It is upon the notion of the organization of diversities, as well as the reproduction of uniformity, that a progressive science of human behavior must base itself.

### *Diachronic Distributions*

#### CHILD DEVELOPMENT

The most conventional time sequence in culture-and-personality is the transformation of a cohort of asocial infants into socialized adults. The special assumption usually made here is that the transformation of any cohort is accomplished by its manipulation at the hands of a preceding cohort which has undergone the same transformation. Gorer has stated it clearly:

It is on the basis of social continuity that the assumption is made that in any given society (or portion of society, where the society is large enough to be differentiated by regions or classes or a combination of both) the observable adults shared experiences and vicissitudes of childhood similar to those which observable infants and children are now undergoing; and further, that observable infants and children will grow up to have shared predispositions and characters similar to those of the observable adults. This assumption of *recapitulation* would seem to be the basic assumption of the study of national character, and is the assumption that divides the study of national character from the study of individual psychology.

This model of continuous intergenerational transformation, since it makes of each cohort a replica of its adult predecessor, is logically comparable to models of genetic copying in biological reproduction. The mechanism, in genetics, is the gene, which carries genetic information to each cell of the maturing organism, instructing it how to respond to various circumstances. National character, in Gorer's sense, is the analogue of genetic structure in the geneticist's sense: it is assumed to be constant for each "cell" in the social organism, and to carry the informa-

tion which determines the response of that "cell" to its environment. It is this analogy which rationalizes Mead's assertion which has already been mentioned with some disapproval earlier in this chapter:

Any member of a group, provided that his position within that group is properly specified, is a perfect sample of the group-wide pattern on which he is acting as an informant. So a twenty-one-year-old boy born of Chinese-American parents in a small upstate New York town who has just graduated *summa cum laude* from Harvard and a tenth-generation Boston-born deaf mute of United Kingdom stock are equally perfect examples of American national character, *provided that their individual position and individual characteristics are taken fully into account.*

Mead is asserting that the differences between the Chinese-American and the Boston-born deaf mute are of the same order as the differences between a neurone in a person's brain and an epithelial cell in the same person's finger: each is (in the analogy) a perfect mature expression of the same genetic structure developing under different circumstances. A result of phrasing the problem of temporal sequence in this genetic form is that two socialization processes may be considered. One is the process by which the "genotype"—the cultural character and the basic personality—is transmitted from one generation to the next; the other is the process by which individuals are "phenotypically" differentiated from one another, as the result of differential experience, in order to play different social roles.

Anthropologists always have been interested in the techniques used in the education (or "enculturation" or "socialization") of the young in a given socio-cultural system. In part, this interest is inseparable from the task of general ethnography. Thus, for instance, it has long been recognized that much of the ritual impedimenta of society is devoted to the task of accomplishing, with maximum speed, the social and psychological transformation of individuals. Many *rites de passage* explicitly aim at effecting in individuals certain changes in motivation, appropriate to the newly assumed social roles which are publicly proclaimed by the ritual. Ceremonies at puberty ("initiation rites"), at marriage, at entrance into organizations, at bereavement, and so on, have the dual function of notifying society of the change in role and of instilling in the participants the values and beliefs which will make performance of the new role congenial. A few anthropologists have been interested in the sequential structure of conditioning processes whose role transitions are discontinuous. They have suggested, for instance, that without such ritual conditioning the individual pays a "great psychic cost." But it is not known, in general, how effective *rites de passage* of various kinds are, under various circumstances, in accomplishing the motiva-

tional transformation of the individual. Similarly, although a few anthropologists have interested themselves in primitive methods of "formal" education, an analysis of the efficiency of these procedures is lacking.

Studies emphasizing developmental processes within the "family" (which, of course, is not the same thing from one society to the next) largely have been guided by culturally modified psychoanalytic hypotheses. Whiting's group at Harvard, in their cross-cultural survey of child-rearing practices and various cultural variables, seeks statistically reliable correlations between developmental experience and adult institutionalized behavior. Mead and her associates, in their less statistically organized studies, have described patiently how the multiple and unfolding experience of the child gradually induces an adult who plays (more or less) the same culturally standardized roles as his parents did before him. In this kind of work, as we have pointed out earlier, the facts of individual diversity and of culture change are held constant conceptually; the system is treated as if uniformity, synchronically and diachronically, were the rule. Despite the consequent deficiencies, which we have already labored to disclose, an impressive consequence of such studies of age patterning is the demonstration of the fact of multiple imprinting of a relatively small number of broad themes or values, each with its special phrasing for various age, sex, and other conditions, by the immensely complex sequential pattern of experiences to which the growing person is subjected in any organized society. This process may not be as reliable as is believed, but the *kind* of process is well authenticated. As Mead eloquently observes:

. . . *simultaneity of impact* is carried not only by the behavior of each individual with whom the child comes in contact, but is also mediated by ritual, drama, and the arts. The shape of a pot, the design on the temple door, the pattern of the courtyard, the form of the bed, the grave posts or the funeral urn, the dancer's headdress and the clown's mask, are again reinforcements and whole statements of the same pattern which the child is experiencing serially.

It is worth remarking that, despite the ceremonial deference shown to academic psychology's learning theories in anthropological research, the kind of learning that goes on in patterning by multiple imprinting is not adequately described by formal learning theory. Consequently, efforts (like that of Whiting's, reported in *Becoming a Kwoma*) to use learning theory to analyze the socialization process, or language learning, do not evoke the more complex psychological reality which Mead's poetic language calls forth. Possibly, models of learning by "imprinting," which follows the "law of effort," will prove to be more useful to anthropologists in analyzing the enculturation process than current reinforcement theory which emphasizes the "law of effect."

Wallace, in an effort to rehabilitate the notion of individual differ-

ences, formulated a probabilistic statement of the relation between cultural learning and personality development:

. . . the probability of any definable sequence of formative events is equal to the probability of the emergence of a given type of personality, and the total number of individuals possessing that type of personality will be the product of that probability and the size of the population.

But Wallace's formulation, like Sapir's and Spiro's cited earlier, still leaves unresolved the basic problem of all these procedures: the reliability of the processes *as they are operationally defined*.

Most treatments of child development processes seem to imply either that development is a very reliable process which can be predicted from a knowledge of cultural milieu and family situation, or that it is a very unreliable process. The proponents of reliability include most of, if not all, the child development workers in culture-and-personality. But some disquieting reports exist in the psychological and sociological literature which, taken at face value, suggest that cherished assumptions about supposedly invariant relations between infantile experience and adult personality are not verifiable by rigorous investigation. Proponents of reliability may point out, in defense, that rigorous studies which attempt to "control" all but a few factors simply abolish the phenomenon under investigation. The solution of this problem can only be found by abandoning the expectation that *any* study will in the near future be able to demonstrate near-perfect reliability for developmental processes, not because the processes are not lawful, but because they are so fantastically complex and so protracted that empirical observation cannot record a sufficient number of relevant dimensions. This, however, is the standard situation at any scientific frontier. Progress now can be made by discovering empirically what the limits of confidence are in predictions of personality development. Such limits presumably will vary, both with the complexity and identity of the particular aspect of the developmental process being predicted, and with the number and identity of independent variables on which the prediction is based. Cross-cultural research into the differential reliability of developmental disciplines will pay handsome dividends, both in practical knowledge and in advancing knowledge of culture and personality as related systems.

#### INTERGENERATIONAL CHANGE IN GROUP CHARACTER

The replication-of-uniformity approach does not, in itself, allow for intergenerational change; it simply assumes that the *same* pattern is transmitted from generation to generation. Students of culture-and-personality do, nevertheless, recognize that group character changes over time (although, it has been suggested, basic personality is apt to lag behind cultural change). The mechanism for an intergenerational

change in replication theory must be a variation in the manner in which a new cohort is treated by the older generation. What processes can induce such change in adult behavior? Some of the answers are extremely cautious. Mead, for instance, in her review of the theoretical position of workers in the field of national character, merely observes *apropos* of culture change:

Each culture may be expected to change concomitantly with impinging events which were hitherto outside the system—an invasion from a hitherto unknown people, an earthquake, an epidemic arising outside the society, and so on. . . .

She also nods in passing to the concept of cultures as “historically patterned systems,” and notes that “each member of each generation, from infancy to old age, contributes to the . . . reinterpretation of the cultural forms.” Conversely, ill-advised adventures in culture change may collapse when they collide with the national character of a people. Such relations between intergenerational changes in personality and cultural events outside the maturational cycle is, presumably, mediated by the child development process itself. Economic and technological changes, for instance, which occur as the result of rational (“peripheral”) motives or of coercive environmental changes, may set in motion other changes which ultimately bring about alterations in child-rearing practices. Thus, intergenerational change in character can come about via cultural changes which first affect *post*-infantile experience. Riesman, for instance, sees a general relationship between demographic condition, economic process, family structure, and personality structure. In almost all such studies, personality is conceived as the dependent variable and economic change (or migration) as the independent, with socialization practices as an intervening variable, dependent on economic change (or migration). Changes in basic personality, furthermore, are usually granted to be very slow and to become noticeable only after efforts to restrain or channel culture change have failed, and after the basic personality has suffered gross and painful distortion under stress.

Cultural changes which increase the heterogeneity of the society, such as acculturation and urbanization, often are believed to pose a serious threat to both personality and social integration. The notion that heterogeneous cultures, split into incongruous fragments, must inevitably produce conflict-ridden personalities, is a corollary of the common-motive thesis which defines integration as a function of homogeneity. From the organization-of-diversity standpoint, however, culture change is not necessarily traumatic; indeed, it is to be regarded as the natural condition of man. If we regard most “living” cultures as heterogeneous and in constant, relatively rapid change (rapid change, incidentally, does not necessarily imply either change in material artifacts or rapid cumulative evolution), we note first that heterogeneity and change by

definition no longer imply psychological and cultural disorganization. The causes of such disorganization must be sought elsewhere than in heterogeneity and change per se. The fundamental problem again becomes the organization of diversity rather than the replication of uniformity.

Now it is possible that when the culture is "heterogeneous" and rapidly changing, there will be a wider variety of personality types produced than in the homogeneous, slowly changing culture. Each of these types may be as consistent internally as any type produced in a stable homogeneous culture. The problem of such a complex society will not be that all of its members have split personalities, but rather that the problems of sociocultural organization may exceed the capacities of its members. Under the latter eventuality, many individuals secondarily may experience privation and frustration and come to suffer from psychosomatic and neurotic complaints; but these will be the consequence of failure of the system to answer the wants of certain of its members. This leads, in turn, to the suspicion that the traditionally disadvantaged sub-groups in a society—e.g., ethnic or religious minorities, native populations under foreign domination, and the lower economic classes—may suffer high incidences of discomfort and illness. This is not directly because of the heterogeneity of the society, but because of the particular disadvantages from which they happen to suffer disproportionately, such as inadequate nutrition, contempt, epidemic illness, physical abuse, and the shock of cultural loss.



## 49 The Implications of Culture Change for Personality Development



Margaret Mead

WHAT WAS SAID ABOUT THE ARTICLE BY RUTH BENEDICT (II:47) APPLIES TO *this one* provided that we note that Professor Mead continues to play a role in the vanguard of personality-and-culture studies as well as in other aspects of anthropology. We are particularly interested in this essay for its concentration on a realm of crucial anthropological concern, culture change. Mead discusses various kinds of change, including that which occurs through the contact of previously disparate societies but also touching on changes in a single society through time. As was seen in the article by Wallace (II:48), some of Mead's assumptions can be seriously questioned. Others continue to withstand the tests of time and the criticism of colleagues.

In our current thinking about the development of human personality there is a tendency to discuss the effects of culture change—whether

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If any one person symbolizes anthropology to the general public it is Margaret Mead (b. 1901) who is Curator of Ethnology at the American Museum of Natural History and Adjunct Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University. Few anthropologists have spent so much time in the field: some of her studies have been carried out in Samoa, the Admiralty Islands (Manus), New Guinea and Bali. Her interests are varied, as a partial list of her publications will reveal: *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928), *Growing Up in New Guinea* (1930), *The Changing Culture of an Indian Tribe* (1932), *Kinship in the Admiralty Islands* (1934), *Male and Female* (1949), *New Lives for Old* (1956), and *An Anthropologist at Work* (1959). Among Professor Mead's latest books are *Continuities in Cultural Evolution* (1964) and a volume of her selected papers, *Anthropology, A Human Science* (1964).

that change be between generations, or between the former and present environment, as though it were an interruption, however frequent, in normal development. Case histories note faithfully that one or other of the parents or spouses were immigrants, that the family has moved many times, or there was a shift from a rural environment to an urban. Allowances are made for these factors as one might make allowance for a physical handicap or the results of a railroad accident.

The assumption implicit in the case history is that the normal course of a human life would be cast under conditions where all the ancestors had lived for several generations in the same place, where social change as registered in the living habits of two successive generations was slow enough to be easily assimilable by adults, and where young people would in turn grow up to marry others of almost exactly the same background. This implicit model, derived as it is from the statistically more frequent types of family life in earlier centuries, has such important implications for education and therapy that it seems worthwhile to do two things: 1) to examine it in reality and not as a construct. That can only be done through field material on primitive or very isolated folk populations, so as to bring into relief the construct quality of the model with which we deal today. 2) To challenge the validity of the model for present-day thinking, and suggest an alternative formulation which seems closer to the observed facts of modern life.

When we examine personality development in a homogeneous, slowly changing culture we find certain outstanding characteristics. Every individual in the human environment will carry the same cultural assumption; both he who observes the social forms gladly, and he who flouts and ignores them; the man who is admitted to the ceremony, and the woman who is excluded; the chief who sets his foot on the slave's neck, and the slave who kneels to receive the stepping foot. If the child is influenced more by the phrasing of one parent than of the other, because of some temperamental identification or accident of upbringing, he will still make a choice that is completely encompassed within his culture.

In a polygamous culture the wife who accepts her co-wife and the wife who rejects her co-wife, both act on a common premise that polygamy is a way in which marriage is normally organized. The gentleness of a grandmother may be contrasted with rough handling, or even cruel practical joking on the part of the grandfather, but the grandmother's gentleness allows for and in a sense contains the joking of the grandfather. She can be gentler because his harshness will prevent her grandson from being too softened by her behavior. He can be harsh because the solace of her gentleness can be relied upon.

The knee baby may be weaned with great suddenness and apparent lack of care because an earlier period has been, as it were, included in

the weaning process. The child has learned that suddenness is not necessarily cruelty, or that all periods of deprivation are followed by periods of indulgence, or that whenever he has been the victim, he has in turn been able to retaliate. The single act, or special treatment accorded the child at one period—at teething, weaning, or in learning sphincter control—does not stand alone to traumatize or provide some life-long obsessive pattern.

Adults and older children, within whose personality the culturally distinctive learning sequence has been integrated, are able to impart simultaneously the place of the present bit of learning in a longer sequence, that which the child has already experienced and the part which is to come. The trembling hand of old age, as it strokes a child's feverish skin, contains in it a promise not only of the bearableness of illness, but also of the bearableness of death itself, or of the unbearableness of both.

I do not mean to indicate that because a culture is homogeneous and very slowly changing, this means that growing up within it is necessarily a smooth, painless, or untraumatic process. However traumatic or frustrating the life experience is, it can nevertheless be presented to each growing individual as *viable*, and to that extent bearable. The demands made in traditional Japanese culture on the child and on every individual in the society may seem on inspection to go beyond the limits of human tolerance. Yet Japanese culture has survived and provided philosophical and aesthetic statements of life which made life significant and meaningful, if not pleasant, to those who were born within it.

This *simultaneity of impact* is carried not only by the behavior of each individual with whom the child comes in contact, but is also mediated by ritual, drama, and the arts. The shape of a pot, the design on the temple door, the pattern of the courtyard, the form of the bed, the grave posts or the funeral urn, the dancer's headdress and the clown's mask, are again reinforcements and whole statements of the same pattern which the child himself is experiencing serially.

Significant contrasts can be drawn between the course of personality development in which children are majorly reared by grandparents who have almost completed the cycle of life, by parents who stand at the maximum point of contrast with the child, or by older children, themselves but recently emerged from the state in which their younger charges now are. Even though differences in emphasis of this sort, or the comparable differences when the nurse is of a different class, or because of the intervention of the boarding school, may act as determinative factors in the distinctive differences between cultures, it is seldom an all or none matter. Children are not reared entirely by children, entirely by parents, or entirely by nurses. Many different people of different ages and both sexes, different temperaments and contrasting kinship positions, play counterpunctal roles in the life of the growing child.

Two further characteristics of growing up in a homogeneous, slowly changing society may be described as the effective *prefiguring of future experience* and *reinforcement and consolidation of past experience*. As soon as the child is able to assimilate the behavior of those about him, he sees older children living out the next steps in his own emerging life pattern, sees the dying and the dead completing it. On the other hand he sees the child at the mother's breast suckled as he was suckled, soothed or scolded in the same words which were so recently used to him. His own infancy—with its uncontrolled outbursts of anger, unmanageable fears, unregulated excretion, and exorbitant hungers and thirsts—does not remain as the same kind of partly repressed, partly remembered record of ignominy and licentiousness with which clinical pictures in our type of society make us so familiar.

Again and again the individual memory, so treacherous, so subject to distortion, is corrected and quieted by the child's experiences as a spectator of many other similar situations, which other babies are living through just as he is emerging from that stage himself. As a five- to ten-year-old he observes the differently loaded behavior of early childhood from a quite different set of preoccupations.

At adolescence, the reassurance provided by such repetition is available when the rapidity of physical changes within the body revives some of the early childhood patterns, or as the mother awaits the birth of her first baby, or the father anticipates parenthood. When extreme old age again brings early childhood experience dangerously or temptingly close to consciousness, infants are still present to scream and tauten their bodies like a bent bow, to defecate in anger, to pound the breast, or cling to it for comfort too long. Man lives through these events, which loom so conspicuously in his own overinflated memory, and comes out a quite usual person, neither a great criminal nor a great hero.

When an individual grows up in a homogeneous slowly changing culture, the older he grows, the surer he grows, and the better acquainted he becomes with the form which other peoples' behavior will take. Behavior can become automatic; for example, as those who drive motor cars in only one city can let more of their driving behavior sink below the level of consciousness. When to turn right and when to turn left, who should enter a door first and who second, who must be seated first, who will help themselves first from the common dish, when the ceremony will really begin, how much error to allow on any calculation, when people mean what they say and when their speech is only ceremonial self-deprecation or shrewd bargaining—all these the child learns as he grows.

As old age approaches and the immediate memory dims, the past is a reliable guide to the present, and the old grandfather threads his way with assurance through the most intricate social situation. Whether the

culture is one in which consciousness is valued or deprecated, whether all of life flows smoothly or parts of it are designed to contrast sharply, there are nevertheless wide areas in which the freedom to act habitually lessens fatigue, makes motor behavior more economical, and provides a steady compensation for the decrease in spontaneity and zest which usually accompanies the aging process.

If we consider carefully these real characteristics of life in a homogeneous society, it becomes immediately apparent that these conditions are true for such a limited number of our population today that those few are placed in a position so deviant that it becomes a liability through its unusualness. The carefully fitted together internally coherent sequences of behavior and the implications for learning of their presence in the behavior of others, the prefiguration of the future and the consolidation of the past, or finally, the increase in automatic behavior and sureness with age—all these are missing. The rapidity of social change alone during the last few decades has, for most people, eliminated all of these features. Each person who approaches an infant is likely to approach it with behavior which embodies sequences to which the child will not otherwise be exposed. The behavior of the adults is discrepant and confused because of the breaks in continuity in their own upbringing.

The growing child sees old people sicken (although seldom allowed to see them die) and fail in a way congruent with *their* past. Children only a few years younger than himself are reared along entirely different lines—they are rocked where he was put firmly in his cradle; fed on self-demand where he was kept to schedule, given a pacifier where he was denied one, or the reverse. Instead of being able to develop more and more automatic behavior, he must learn to be increasingly on the alert for lights that turn off differently, lavatories with a different flushing system, games which have the same names but are played with different rules, etc. Far more important, on the social level, he meets ever-changing standards of manners and morals, shifting criteria of refusal and acceptance. There is no chance for relaxation, for, even as he becomes adept and in part accustomed to the ways of his adult contemporaries, his own children begin to display new forms of behavior to which he has no clues. By the time grandchildren arrive, the gap is so great that many grandparents are refusing even to try to bridge it.

Seen in this light, it will be recognized that the normal expectancy today is for a type of personality development with different characteristics, and that there is urgent need to define these characteristics and integrate them into our systematic expectations of human beings. Since our systematic knowledge of personality formation in homogeneous societies far outstrips our knowledge of the process or even of the effects of heterogeneity and social change, the next step must be to indicate

some of the problems involved; that is, to alert the research worker and begin to clarify the task of the educator and therapist.

We may begin with the type of case in which an individual reared in *one homogeneous culture enters, as an adult, a quite different culture*. By this I mean such contrasts as between an Italian village and the city of Detroit, or between a Puerto Rican village and an American factory, or correspondingly when a member of western Euro-American culture goes to live permanently in an isolated part of the Arctic, or in a South-east Asian jungle. In this case the individual has already a coherent personality, nurtured under the conditions which we have already described. (The Italian villager or the Puerto Rican will have come from a more coherent background than the member of a modern urbanized culture, but it is still possible to find living individuals in England or Germany who grew up within a culture which was still relatively homogeneous and not yet completely disrupted by unassimilated change.) It will be useful to indicate here some of the types of adjustment which may occur.

The immigrant may keep intact his cultural picture of the world, his cultural ideas of hierarchy or order of the way in which events "naturally" occur, and merely accept from his environment concrete information and points of references. He will learn the address of a restaurant, how to read the menu, what a meal will cost and how much of a tip to give. The significance of the restaurant itself—as a place where men go to be away from their women folk, where one takes one's whole family on a holiday, as a place where one takes a mistress but never a wife, where one drinks alone in a curtained booth—will retain its original configurational meaning for him. When he goes there he will experience the sense of irresponsible masculinity, the pater familias role, the sense of pleasant sin, or rather repellent sin for which restaurant life stood in his original culture. He may learn the names of many restaurants, their street numbers and days of closing, but each item remains simply a concrete, more or less imperfect substitution of a foreign element in an unaltered scheme. He may marry a wife from the new culture, and only perceive her behavior at the points where it can be interpreted in terms of his own conception of the wife and mother role. If from her cultural background she expects him to carve the roast, while he comes from a culture in which one honors the man by never letting him serve a spoonful of peas or even ask for the salt, her behavior will symbolize lack of respect to him to the end of his days.

We see an interesting illustration of the relationship between the substitution of such concrete and historical bits of a preexisting pattern as contrasted with the substitution of new patterns in the phenomenon known as "tropical memory." After several years in a completely alien environment, where the physical environment, the food, the tempo, the

very premises of life are different, the occidental often finds that he has forgotten most of the proper names which were completely available to him in his western life. Practically every item in his former life which would have been spelled in English with a capital letter disappears, while the life which they stood for is remembered perfectly clearly. Conversations on one's return to the old scene after several years absence have an extraordinary quality. There is conversation of the respective merits of two actors whose names are forgotten, of a play, the name lost, at two theaters, once familiar and now designated as "that theater near the center of town with the very wide single balcony." As each of these fantastic conversations, studded with omitted proper names goes on, the names begin to come back and, after a few weeks in the home environment, again become parts of the ordinary memory store. It will take much research to describe this process which gives the impression of a different "setting" of the human organism on a concrete historical level on the one hand, and the cultural pattern level on the other.

A second type of conflict occurs when the immigrant or colonist attempts to establish a new pattern by trying to alter his expectations and standards to fit into the new society. Here a variety of effects may be seen. His previous cultural experience may become almost inaccessible, even to the point where a language spoken until adulthood appears to be forgotten, so intense is his acceptance of the new and the need for blocking out the "interference" of the old. If the individual later leaves the new culture and returns to the old, a similar type of apparent loss of memory may occur. In this type of "culture contact adjustment," the individual does not fit the two cultures together, but puts, as it were, the whole of his personality in a position to learn the new culture. What this means in terms of psychosomatic cost, we have as yet no method of assaying.

Even a relatively homogeneous culture may utilize such sharp contrasts in the course of the developmental sequence that a related type of forgetting may occur and some items be almost completely removed from memory availability. In tracing personality development under such circumstances, there is, I believe, adequate data to show that these intervals of extreme contrast in the life history, although sinking below the level of availability, are part of the personality structure of the individual. It is possible that some of these contrasts, whether in structure of situation within the life history in a homogeneous culture, or between two cultures, each learned at a different period of life, may be found to have a variety of systematic and identifiable effects. In some cases they may be part of a vertical structure, and an essential part of it; in others, mere horizontal supplements to the rest of life in which the "years I spent in Paris" are regarded essentially as duplications of years

spent learning and enjoying another culture. They may also play into a more abstract definition of life in which the individual who has shared intensely in two contrasting cultures, may include contrasts in culture in his widened gestalt. In the case of children, exposed serially to two cultures, some scattered evidence suggests that the premises of the earlier may persist as distortions of perception into later experience, so that years later errors in syntax or reasoning may be traced to the earlier and "forgotten" cultural experience.

Another order of complication occurs when the split between the old and the new culture is made, not as a split between the conceptual and the concrete, or completely in time and attention, but instead as between different areas of life, such as home and work, family life and public life, etc. Materials on immigrant families provide abundant illustrations of these various splits, of groups who live in enclaves where the native language is still spoken and the whole pattern of living conforms to the original culture. Leaving it daily for the working world, they speak the language of that outside world, handle the currency, fill out the forms, and meet the work expectations of the new culture. Where such a split is made, the older conceptual framework in which home and work had their own significance is likely to survive to invest the culture of the "working world" with the glamor or drudgery assigned to work, versus home life, in the older culture. Where the living habits of the new culture are taken over for everyday life, but festival patterns of the old cultures are invoked for weddings, funerals, and all high holidays, the new culture becomes invested with the aura of the ordinary; the old keeps a nostalgia-invoking quality.

A still different type of split occurs with the need to adjust to the new culture through the person of a relative or spouse, as when an immigrant boy comes to live with a highly acculturated uncle, or a recently arrived immigrant marries a girl who is thoroughly representative of the new culture. Whatever patterned significance the particular relationship had, if a wife was seen as comfort or responsibility, a mentor and curber of errant impulses, or a partner in indulgence, becomes the conceptual form in which the new culture is perceived and assimilated.

Changes in status as an immigrant moves from one country to another may also deliver such a shock that the perception of the new culture contains a sharp gradient, or sharp discontinuities as a major element. The shock may be so great that no systematic perception of the new culture is ever achieved or a systematic distortion may result.

I have discussed first the type of change which occurs when an individual is reared in one culture, and migrates to the second culture in which he establishes a relationship of some duration. These are the dramatic situations, easy to delineate, extremely conspicuous and familiar



in the American scene. Lesser types of migration, especially from rural to urban life, or from class to class, present the same features in less dramatic form.

In generation change, we can find the analogue of the individual who keeps his original cultural orientation and merely adjusts superficially to the new culture. Those who live in the past, while transacting their everyday business on a contemporary level, are familiar figures in societies which combine rapid change with class mobility. An adjustment may be "frozen" at an earlier level by identification with parents whose way of life belonged to another generation, because the individual, now adult, cannot live at the same class level or in the same way they did. Without models for his new life, he may make only the most superficial adjustment, and his values and patterns of human relationships may be completely referred to the past. Conversely, we have the type of adjustment in which the individual "migrates" into the next generation, assumes the manners and attitudes of the child generation, often suppressing completely all the values of his own generation. The present trend in American life to keep the mother perennially young is tending to standardize this type of generation displacement. It is developing compensatory or defensive reactions on the part of the young as they attempt to distinguish themselves—the real inhabitants of adolescence in 1947—from the invading forty-year-olds.

Fragmented types of development may occur as the growing child patterns his conscience on some member of the older generation, and shapes his ideal of himself upon the expressed day dreams of some other member who belongs to a different generation or possibly to both a different generation and a different original culture. Serious distortions occur when the mechanisms of inter-generation behavior, whatever that may be, break down. This occurs when an epidemic selectively kills off the grandparent generation, which happened in many parts of the South Seas in World War I, or where a work or war pattern takes the young men during the years when they would have been models or disciplinarians of their younger brothers, or buffers between the younger and the older. Memory distortions as severe as those which cover a change from one culture to another may occur, as the elders retrospectively falsify their own past behavior either to make it conform to the demands which *their* parents implanted in them as children, or to the world of their children to which they do not belong. Both types of distortion create difficulties, as both violate the original consistencies of the real behavior and make it possible either to perpetuate an increasingly untenable behavioral ideal of imputed past conservatism, or to obscure the possible difficulties and contradictions involved in some new experimental step being taken by the adolescent generation. Thus a parent insisting that his youth conformed to the highest standards, rather than

admitting he often failed to conform and paid heavily in anxiety or guilt, will introduce a disorienting factor into the child's adjustment. Likewise, the overcomplacent parent who takes advantage of loosening standards to live out vicariously some license which was not permitted in his own youth, may equally cast a shadow of sin over some adolescent practice which would otherwise have its own workable ethics.

There remain to consider those types of generation contrast which occur with cumulative, rapidly accelerating change such as the world has experienced in the last two or three hundred years. A new set of contrasts become conspicuous. The previous generation seems surer because of having been reared under more homogeneous conditions which are gone, and the contemporary generation is both up to date and unsure.

Culture change aggravates the effects of oscillatory changes between the members of different generations within the same family, as when an indulgent mother spoils and over-protects a daughter, who then makes heavy demands on *her* daughter. She, in turn, schooled to self-denying service, becomes an indulgent mother. It is probable also that those trends within single family structure in which there is some deep instability, will have a greater tendency to become cumulative and result in disaster during a period of rapid accelerating change.

It should furthermore be recognized that the types of contrast due to contrast of culture and those due to contrast between generations are of course interwoven in every possible way, with the culture contrast being at least superficially easier to describe.

Both types of contrast—those introduced by migration of individuals between cultures, and those introduced by a rapidity of change which places the members of succeeding generations who do not migrate in very strongly contrasted position—may be described as primary effects of cultural change. The disorganizations they produce have a kind of clarity of outline which may be attributed to the existing degrees of homogeneity in the cultures or generation behavior patterns involved. We face in the present day world a form of personality which reflects these primary contrasts, at a second and third remove in the children and grandchildren of those whose personalities have been subjected to pressures and changes of the order which has been described. Where the first generation of sharp culture contact, between different cultures or between different periods of rapid cultural change, manifested the various types of amnesia, distortion, and confusion between different perceptions of cultural and historical reality, the second generation shows the effects of having been reared among individuals who were in various degrees representative of the first type.

This second stage of manifestation of extremely rapid change combined with increasing mobility of peoples so that both temporal and local roots are gone, is becoming the expected personality type for the

world. This is so provided the breakdown of European feudal institutions on the one hand and of Oriental agrarian societies on the other, proceed piecemeal under various unrelated auspices rather than under the auspices of any group powerful enough to handle their own orthodoxy as a homogeneity which must be accepted. Although data are lacking, it is probable that such a purposive westernization or modernization of a society, under the guidance of a self-consistent ideology, will produce merely another example of primary culture contact. In North and South America, in Western Europe, and in Britain the war has loosened the old locality ties which preserved some cultural and local orientation in the face of great technological change. We may therefore expect to find as the emerging type of personality the child who has been reared among persons who have themselves been subjected to profound cultural and historical disorientation. The same is true of all those parts of the orient where modernization and the importation of western ideas is unaccompanied by power sufficient to regularize and integrate the change. This power did exist in nineteenth century Japan, so that Japanese culture maintained its cultural integrity through industrial revolution, as Britain had done earlier.

In this group of partially disoriented and partially reoriented persons, certain characteristic forms of behavior may be examined systematically in their effect on the children who grow up under their influence. Among them may be found: 1) a nostalgia for a homogeneous and internally consistent view of life which becomes an available focus for various forms of religious and political propaganda offering a unitary solution of all problems; 2) a disturbance between memories of the past and expectations of the future; 3) internal discrepancies in habits of disciplining children, conducting domestic relations, and managing work contacts; 4) disturbed and inconsistent images of their children's future; 5) unevennesses in grasp of the contemporary culture in which they live, ranging from formal literacy without any real ability to handle reading as a tool, to isolated professional patterns of behavior thoroughly discrepant with the rest of their habits of living. It is necessary to add to this picture that in most instances no single pair of parents will show the same pattern. Teachers, friends, and relatives will show other variants, so that to the internal contradictions and inconsistencies existing in each rearing adult, must be added the whole set of intricate relationships among a group of such adults.

As it was possible to describe the characteristics of personality development within a homogeneous, slowly changing society, when members of such societies were subjected to sharp and prolonged exposures to other cultures or to very rapid technological change, so it should also be possible to begin to describe the characteristics of this group who show the secondary effects of the spatial and temporal dis-

turbances of modern times. This secondary effect has been described by Charles Eastman (son of a Sioux Indian mother and a father who was part Sioux, part Caucasian) who lived as a boy the life of his grandparents, and as an adult, the life of an educated modern American.

As a child I understood how to give, I have forgotten this grace since I became civilized. I lived the natural life, whereas I now live the artificial. Any pretty pebble was valuable to me then; every growing tree an object of reverence. Now I worship with the white man before a painted landscape whose value is estimated in dollars! Thus the Indian is reconstructed, as the *natural rocks are ground to powder and made into artificial blocks* which may be built into the walls of modern society.

Here speaks the representative of the primary stage who already sees the young in the next stage where values are no longer multiple and incommensurate but estimated in dollars; that is, estimated *on a single scale*.

The capacity to organize experience in terms of a cultural reality inherent in growing up in a homogeneous culture, is lost among the children of those who have themselves undergone the first impact of change. As a result perceived experience becomes *atomized* into units which have no structural relationship to a whole that can no longer be perceived. The shape of the blocks themselves is seen as arbitrary in contrast to the "natural rocks," those whose form was not imposed upon an aggregation of meaningless units.

Individuals reared in this secondary stage develop an approach to life which Erikson has called "tentative" and I have described as "situational." Erikson has pointed out that the modern American, who is perhaps the best studied example of this modern type of human being, must be able to be *sedentary* as well as *migratory*. His tentativeness must cover not only a range of situations but a range which actually involves polarization.

A fourth characteristic of this personality type may be described as a tendency to fragment, unsystematically, the counterpart within personality development of the tendency to perceive the world atomistically. This lack of coherence, this tendency toward fragmentation under strain provides an opening for propagandist movement offering a coherent view of life just as the nostalgia of the primary stage presents an opening to such movements.

Meanwhile modern American culture has developed a variety of therapeutic and educational measures designed to protect and strengthen the individuals who are exposed to this terrific cultural strain, especially during childhood. Conspicuous among these socially self-corrective devices are: 1) emphasis on a new type of child rearing which takes "self-demand" (the child's own individual physiological rhythm) as the

framework for habit formation; 2) the progressive education movement with its philosophy of letting the child strike its own pace; 3) types of social case work and psychiatry which stress the need for helping the individual work out his own problems and achieve a new integration. These methods may be seen in historical perspective as the efforts of a disoriented society to develop human beings who will be strong enough to survive and participate constructively in creating new cultural forms which will again restore some order to human life.

Kepes has described the modern artist as fasting from the indigestibility of the visual forms of this muddled modern world and turning entirely to inner experience as the only reliable contemporary guide. Movements which turn to "inner rhythms" may be expected to develop in almost every field of life during this period of unprecedented strain which now faces the human race. They need not be seen as a final rejection of cultural form or traditional, ethical, or aesthetic discipline, but rather as a blessed expedient, imaginatively devised, for the present human emergency.

## 50 *Is Anthropology Alive?*



Gerald D. Berreman

ANTHROPOLOGISTS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN SENSITIVE ABOUT THE ETHICAL problems implicit in their discipline. Perhaps, in view of what Berreman tells us below, that should be amended to read "some anthropologists." In the past, however, the process of self-selection to enter the discipline and the process of selection through graduate education that went on in the preparation of professionals, assured that a high proportion of the professionals would look objectively, if not coldly, on their own culture and separate themselves from its myths. Then too, some of the problems faced by contemporary anthropologists were simply not in existence as recently as in pre-World War II days; certainly they were not pressing. For example, the people in most of the societies studied in those days were unlikely to read what was written about them and this made even such a simple question as the protection of the identity of informants much less of a problem.

SOURCE: "Is Anthropology Alive? Social Responsibility in Social Anthropology," Gerald D. Berreman's Presidential address to the Southwestern Anthropological Association, presented on March 24, 1967. This paper has also been accepted for publication in *Current Anthropology* and will appear in 1968. *Current Anthropology* has been running a number of articles on the same general subject of ethical problems in anthropology. It also features "CA treatment," that is the coupling of an article with extensive discussion by ten, fifteen, or even more, professional commentators. For this reason it is urged that interested students pursue the matter in the pages of *Current Anthropology*.

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*But, really, the biggest ethical problems that anthropologists face today were already fully available in the past although consciousness of them took much longer to develop and spread. Anthropologists played the role of handmaidens to colonial administrations that were often brutal and repressive. They also took and sometimes eagerly sought office as advisers to military establishments. Even then there were voices raised in warning. Today there is a general outcry that has reached the floor of the annual meeting of the Fellows of the American Anthropological Association and which has resulted in resolutions on ethical topics and in the preparation of a formal code of ethics for the profession.*

*The most controversial area of all has to do not with the active collaboration between some anthropologists and some governments, but with attempts to maintain pure attitudes of disengagement. To put it another way, some anthropologists maintain that anthropology is best served and serves best when permitted an ivory tower existence. To this comes the reply that everyone in reality leans to one side; neutrality supports the status quo and becomes despite itself a partisan position.*

*Professor Berreman's strongly held and sometimes bitterly expressed views on this matter were originally presented orally when he delivered his presidential address to the Southwestern Anthropological Association. A majority of the audience responded by giving him an ovation through which another part of the audience sat with grim faces. Some subsequent letters from established and respected colleagues were anything but complimentary. Thus the matter stands and thus it must be presented to the reader. Hopefully, in his attempt to frame his own view he will, like Berreman, seek to do so by using what he has already learned from anthropology.*

## I

*"The old formula for successful counterinsurgency used to be ten troops for every guerrilla," one American specialist [in Thailand] remarked. "Now the formula is ten anthropologists for each guerrilla."*

BRAESTRUD, 1967

## II

The notion that contemporary world events are irrelevant to the professional concerns of anthropologists was laid neatly to rest when, at the meeting of Fellows of the American Anthropological Association in Pittsburgh this fall, Michael Harner rose to challenge the ruling of the president-elect that a resolution introduced by David and Kathleen Gough Aberle condemning the United States' role in the war in Vietnam

was out of order because it did not "advance the science of anthropology," or "further the professional interests of anthropologists." Harner suggested that "genocide is not in the professional interests of anthropologists." With that, the chair was voted down and the resolution was presented, amended and passed.

The dogma that public issues are beyond the interests or competence of those who study and teach about man comprises myopic and sterile professionalism, and a fear of commitment which is both irresponsible and irrelevant. Its result is to dehumanize the most humanist of the sciences, as Eric Wolf has called our discipline; to betray utterly the opportunity and obligation which he has claimed for anthropology, namely: "the creation of an image of man that will be adequate to the experience of our time." It forsakes the insights of generations of social scientists, social philosophers and other men of knowledge who, since the Enlightenment, have been cast in the role of social critics.

That neutrality in science is illusory is a point which has been made often and well. Telling statements by social scientists in recent times have followed Robert Lynd's *Knowledge for What?*, published in 1939. That work is by now classic as are the writings of C. Wright Mills on that issue, most notably his articles: "The Social Role of the Intellectual" (1944), "On Knowledge and Power" (1955), and his book, *The Sociological Imagination* (1959). A series of recent essays on the topic appear in a volume honoring Mills entitled *The New Sociology*. Among them are: Alvin Gouldner's "Anti-Minotaur: The Myth of a Value-Free Sociology," Douglas Dowd's "Thorstein Veblen and C. Wright Mills: Social Science and Social Criticism," Sydney Willhelm's "Scientific Unaccountability and Moral Accountability," Andrew Hacker's "Power to Do What?," Kenneth Winetrout's "Mills and the Intellectual Default." Other outstanding examples of the genre are Paul Baran's "The Commitment of the Intellectual" (1965), John Bennett's "Science and Human Rights: Reason and Action," (1949), and recently, Noam Chomsky's "The Responsibility of Intellectuals" (1967). Much of what I have to say here is re-emphasis of their major points—an undertaking for which I do not apologize, for I think there are few ideas which are new in the world and exceedingly few that are both new and important. These I think are important.

For evidence rather than statements of the problem of social responsibility in social science, I refer the reader to accounts of Project Camelot, to the reported role of Michigan State University in Vietnam and its relationship to the C.I.A., and to accounts of Project Agile, "the Pentagon's worldwide counterinsurgency research program" whose anthropologists and other social scientists are said to be working hard in Thailand and elsewhere in Southeast Asia on projects of direct military relevance. I refer the reader also to our illustrious forbear, Franz



Boas, who was alert to startlingly similar problems in the uses of anthropology and anthropologists during World War I, and deplored them publicly: “. . . a number of men who follow science as their profession [including “at least four men who carry on anthropological work”] . . . have prostituted science by using it as a cover for their activities as spies.” Especially relevant to our contemporary problems are discussions of the nature and implications of the relationship between academics and universities and government sponsorship of research. This problem is posed vividly for anthropologists in reports in the *Fellow Newsletter* of our own national association. For those of us in the University of California system it has been discussed at some length by students and faculty in the *Daily Californian Weekly Magazine*. Anyone who thought scientists, academics or intellectuals could work in a value-free vacuum has been disabused of that fantasy by the revelations in the daily press and in the March 1967 issue of *Ramparts*, of the influence of the C.I.A. in student and professional organizations and in foundations.

But this should not surprise us. Scientists, we know, are creatures of culture and society like anyone else. “By the fact of his living,” C. Wright Mills reminds us, every individual “contributes, however minutely, to the shaping of his society and to the course of its history, even as he is made by society and by its historical push and shove.” We as social scientists are not exempt. What we do even as scientists is conditioned by our culture and has meaning in that culture. As Morton Fried said in his paper on the pseudo-scientific investigation of race, and as Robert Lynd said before him, science has no responsibility, but scientists do. Scientists are people. They cannot escape values in the choices they make nor in the effects of their acts.

If we choose to collect our data and make our analyses without regard to their use—leaving that choice to others—we may believe that we are adhering to the most rigorous scientific canons (and hence the most highly *valued* canons—note the word) by not intervening in society. But to say nothing is not to be neutral. To say *nothing* is as much a significant act as to say *something*. Douglas Dowd noted “The alternatives are not ‘neutrality’ and ‘advocacy.’ To be uncommitted is not to be neutral, but to be committed—consciously or not—to the *status quo*; it is, in Mills’ phrase, ‘to celebrate the present.’” Guillermo Batalla referred to this fact when, in a recent issue of *Human Organization*, he wrote of what he called “conservative thought in applied anthropology,” and its pervasiveness as a premise of our work. “. . . The questions of human value,” Lynd pointed out thirty years ago, “are inescapable, and those who banish them at the front door admit them unavowedly and therefore uncritically at the back door.”

Silence permits others in the society less reticent, perhaps less scrupulous, almost certainly less informed, to make their own use of the

material presented. It leaves to politicians and journalists, to entrepreneurs, scoundrels and madmen, as well as to statesmen and benefactors—but especially to the powerful—the interpretation and manipulation of matters about which they frequently know little, and of whose implications they know less, and nearly always far less than those who collected the material or made the analyses. In 1965 Baran noted in this regard “it should be obvious that society’s ‘elections’ [or choices] do not come about by miracles, but that society is guided into some ‘elections’ by the ideology generated by the social order existing at any given time, and is cajoled, frightened, and forced into other ‘elections’ by the interests which are in a position to do the cajoling, the frightening and the forcing. The intellect worker’s withdrawal from seeking to influence the outcome of those ‘elections’ is far from leaving a vacuum in the area of ‘value’ formation.” It is therefore wishful thinking of the most elemental sort to assume that our work can be put before the public without context or interpretation, there to be judged freely and intelligently on its merits without prejudice or manipulation, and to be acted upon accordingly. To assume *that*, is to contribute to misuse born of ignorance or worse. We cannot divorce ourselves from the consequences of our scientific acts any more than we can from those of any other of our acts as human beings. This is a fact of existence in human society and it is a tenet of democracy.

### III

Science—even social science—has finally arrived in our society. The rewards to be obtained for supplying social science data and social science interpretations of the right kinds and in the right places are generous in the United States. To paraphrase Kenneth Winetrout, the intellectual today can join the hired myth-makers and harsh apologists of Madison Avenue and Washington. On campus he can be the paid consultant or the academic entrepreneur and grantsman. Winetrout cites Irving Howe as having remarked that “for once, the carrots are real,” and notes the literal applicability of Carl Becker’s statement that we have a society where it pays to think likewise rather than otherwise. This results in the contemporary prevalence of social scientists whose eyes are on the main chance rather than on the condition of man—the “crack-pot realists,” as Mills liked to call them. This is the context within which we find social scientists whose “ideology of non-involvement in the social effects of scientific research,” Sidney Willhelm noted, simply frees them from social responsibility, creating an “unaccountable scientific aristocracy,” closely allied to the governmental, military and corporate elites who buy their services and validate their heady status. Speaking of the “scholar-experts” who abound in the academic and para-academic worlds

today, Noam Chomsky notes that they “construct a ‘value-free technology’ for the solution of technical problems that arise in contemporary society.” But “the extent to which this ‘technology’ is value-free is hardly very important, given the clear commitments of those who apply it. The problems with which research is concerned are those posed by the Pentagon or the great corporations, not, say, by the revolutionaries of Northeast Brazil or by SNCC. Nor am I aware of a research project devoted to the problem of how poorly armed guerillas might more effectively resist a brutal and devastating military technology. . . .” Yet this is a kind of problem which would be likely to interest social scientists who felt entirely free to follow their intellects—at least as likely as those which have interested them under non-scientific sponsorship.

#### IV

The rationale which supports this scientific unaccountability among moral men is the myth of a value-free social science, identified by Alvin Gouldner as a Minotaur—a beast half man, half bull, confined to a labyrinth and sustained by human victims. This myth has been exposed to all but its most avid beneficiaries and the most credulous in its audience, by events in this country since World War II, just as it was in Europe considerably earlier. Gouldner holds that “. . . one of the main institutional forces facilitating the survival and spread of the value-free myth was its usefulness in maintaining both the cohesion and the autonomy of the modern university, in general, and the newer social science disciplines, in particular.” Perhaps it is more accurately the case that it maintains a whole segment of the profession—or at least the sustaining, symbiotic relationship between that segment of the profession and the sources of its funds, namely corporate foundations and governmental agencies. It is in the labyrinths of those sources that the Minotaur is most welcome and most richly rewarded.

If the Minotaur is to meet his end, it will not be because he was not useful and therefore rewarded by his keepers. For it is not his keepers who will do him in, but his victims as they realize his true nature—as they realize that the value-free social science is in fact mythical as well as inhuman, and not nearly as invulnerable as its bellowing might imply. It has not mattered to those whom the Minotaur has served so well that the value-free social science was more than half bull, and that it provided them with the natural product of a well-fed bull, for they used it not for what it produced, but for what they *made* of what it produced. And they were accomplished alchemists. To change the metaphor wildly, it was Alexander Leighton, I think, who said administrators have used the findings of social scientists as a drunk uses a

lamp post—for support rather than illumination. It is not important what social scientists say so much as how one uses what they say. That depends upon how amenable it is to use and *that* is where the myth of freedom from values is crucial, and where the social responsibility of the social scientist lies.

The end of the Minotaur is bound to come about not by frontal attack, but by the more subtle process of exorcism, undertaken because of the beast's inhumanity and successful because of the beast's mythical substance. Its larger and more fearsome relative in physical science disappeared in the atomic cloud. Our own is fading in the dust of Camelot, the blood of Vietnam and the duplicity of the C.I.A., for these have forced every social scientist to answer anew Irving Horowitz's question "Is he a member of a human science or of an anti-human science?"

But many who applaud the end of Camelot and decry complicity with the C.I.A. seek not to kill or exorcise the Minotaur but to reform it—to create a *truly* value-free social science. They ask the opportunity to forget Camelot, Vietnam and the C.I.A., to shut out the clamor of their students and their "involved" colleagues—to retreat to an ivory tower, there to pursue their work without reference to the outside world. They seek to become students of man who are out of touch with men and unconcerned with men. But in that ivory tower is precisely where the old Minotaur was born, and their very desire to avoid responsibility is responsible for its creation and for the disastrous consequences we now see, and which they now seek to avoid. Camelot and the other disasters of value-free social science are exemplifications of the truth of Sydney Willhelm's charge that "ethical neutrality is a veneer for irresponsibility." Those adventures have done for social science in America what the atomic blasts on Japanese cities did for all science. In James Agee's words,

When the bomb split open the universe and revealed the prospect of the infinitely extraordinary, it also revealed the oldest, simplest, commonest, most neglected and most important of facts: that each man is eternally and above all else responsible for his own soul. . .

This is true even for scientists.

## V

Why is the myth of value-freedom so persistent and cherished? Mills noted that those who exhibit "the curious passion for the mannerism of the non-committed" . . . "conform to the prevailing fear of any passionate commitment. *This*, and not 'scientific objectivity' is what is really wanted by such men when they complain about 'making value

judgments.'” Gouldner says “the one thing [they] . . . can never abide is a lack of decorum, even if the performance is in other respects brilliant”.

But this is a time in which the truth is likely to be overlooked if the commitment to it is not passionately expressed. It is a time when the specialist must forcefully announce not only his knowledge, but its implications and consequences.

## VI

Winetrout evinces the indecorum which offends some of his colleagues but which others, including those I have cited here, have not feared to display, in the closing paragraph of his essay honoring the courageous Mills:

In our present-day world it is not enough to be scholarly; one must be concerned and angry enough to shout. It is not enough to understand the world; one must seek to change it.

One of my major points is that it will change, and our knowledge will contribute to the change in any case—whether or not we are angry and whether or not we seek it. What we have a responsibility to do, is to seek to see that our knowledge is used for humane changes as we who derive that knowledge define humaneness; that is, simply, we must be responsible for what we do.

The great Alfred Schutz suggested that “it is the duty and the privilege of the well-informed citizen in a democratic society to make his private opinion prevail over the public opinion of the man in the street.” This is done not by force, but by reason. I do not advocate special powers for the well-informed on human matters (beyond those which come to reasoned statement), but I decry special restrictions whether externally imposed or self-imposed. The late Robert Oppenheimer is quoted as having spoken before the 100th anniversary sessions of the National Academy of Sciences in 1963, “on the difficult matter of how and when scientists should speak on ‘common and public questions.’” He said, “If I doubt whether professionally we have special qualification on these common questions, I doubt even more that our professional practices should disqualify us, or that we should lose interest and heart in preoccupations which have ennobled and purified men throughout history, and for which the world has great need today.”

Thirty years ago, Lynd maintained that “either the social sciences know more than do . . . *de facto* leaders of the culture as to what the findings of research mean, as to the options the institutional system presents, as to what human personalities want, why they want them,

and how desirable changes can be effected, *or* the vast current industry of social science is an empty facade." And Kathleen Gough Aberle has asked "Who is to evaluate and suggest guidelines for human society, if not those who study it?"

## VII

Our positive responsibility, I think, is to present what we know and what inferences we draw from our knowledge as clearly, thoughtfully and responsibly as we can. This is a value position with practical and humane consequences.

Noam Chomsky, in his recent article in the *New York Review of Books*, identified the responsibility of intellectuals to be "to speak the truth and to expose lies," and he documented brilliantly the fact that this seeming truism is not manifest in the contributions establishment intellectuals (including primarily social scientists and historians) have made in the context of current and recent U. S. foreign policy.

C. Wright Mills' most fundamental tenet was his insistence upon the application of reason and knowledge to practical problems, and decial of the "divorce of knowledge from power." Mills tells us that intellectuals are not bound to have any particular political orientation but, if they are genuine, their work "does have a distinct kind of political relevance." The core of this relevance Mills expressed as "the politics of truth," which carries obligations not only to discover truth, but "to tell it to the right people, at the right time, and in the right way." Conversely, the intellectual should publicly expose and correct errors and falsehoods regardless of their source. The intellectual, said Mills, "ought to be the moral conscience of his society." Few speak to the responsibility of social scientists in our time as cogently as did C. Wright Mills.

Douglas Dowd defines "the chasm between reality and ideal," as the current American crisis, and identifies the focal point of opposition by the young and by intellectuals in the word *hypocrisy*—hypocrisy in American deeds versus American words. This is where we as scientists and as teachers have a major responsibility: to speak the truth; to provide "an adequate definition of reality," as Mills says it; "to tell it like it is," as James Baldwin says it. For candor is a major precondition for trust and for rational action, and this is what is lacking or threatened in our society—in foreign policy; in race relations; in poverty programs; in support of scholarship and research; in university administration; in virtually every sphere of our national life.

The reaction of many of us is to say and do nothing about the problems of the day; to retreat into our research, our administration or our teaching, lulled by activity into a sense of purpose, accomplishment, and virtue, and to hope that things will somehow work out. Do we need

Edmund Burke to remind us that "the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men [and, I might add, informed men] to do nothing"?

We, as anthropologists, have not been wholly at fault. We have had our outspoken champions of truth—about race, about poverty, about professional ethics, about the heavy hands of government and private capital in formulating our research, about war, and especially about the current war in Vietnam. Probably we have more of them in proportion to our numbers than any other academic discipline and any other profession. And I am proud that we have. But we need to emphasize and value these contributions in order to counteract the powerful and irresponsible professionalism which belittles or condemns these endeavors in favor of the mindless and trivial successes obtained under the illusion of freedom from responsibility for one's self and one's work.

In a world where anything we learn is likely to be put to immediate and effective use for ends beyond our control and antithetical to our values, we must choose our research undertakings with an eye to their implications. We must demand the right to have a hand or at least a say in the use of what we do as a condition for doing it. That demand may most often fall short of realization even when it is granted, but it should be a minimal condition of our work. Otherwise, we may become instruments for inhumanity in the guise of humane scientists.

We must seek to apply our knowledge and skills to real problems, defined by us and not simply accepted from the sources which provide our funds. We must ask questions which address the problems of our time rather than merely those which minimize or obscure them. *This* is the acceptance of Wolf's challenge to create an image of man adequate to our time. *This* is the acceptance of the responsibility of the social scientist identified by Lynd as the responsibility "to keep everlastingly challenging the present with the question: 'But what is it that we human beings want, and what things have to be done, in what ways and in what sequence, in order to change the present so as to achieve it?'" This question of his is as scientific as any question we might pose. Nor does the incompleteness of our knowledge disqualify us scientifically, rationally or morally from asserting what we know. Mills pointed out twenty years ago that "if one half of the relevant knowledge which we now possess were really put into the service of the ideals which leaders mouth, these ideals could be realized in short order. The view that all that is needed is knowledge ignores the nub of the problem as the social scientist confronts it: he has little or no power to act politically and his chance to communicate in a politically effective manner is very limited." Gouldner has followed logically with the statement: "The issue . . . is not whether we know enough; the real questions are whether we have the courage to say and use what we know and whether anyone knows

more." This is why we must not be timid in asserting ourselves individually and collectively wherever we can. This is why our professional associations should not now be chary to express views on matters of public policy just as we have not been in the past, and just as other such groups express views on such matters. For students of human behavior to decline comment on human behavior is irresponsibility in a democracy, no matter how controversial the issues.

## VIII

Perhaps our greatest responsibility is as teachers. We must show our students by our example that, as Robert Lekachman has observed, honesty, *not* neutrality, is the prerequisite for good teaching and for good scholarship; that knowledge legitimately leads to informed opinion as well as fact; to understanding of consequences as well as causes; to commitment to act as well as to consider. We must show them that humanity is not incompatible with science; that science without humanity is indeed a monster and that social science without humanity is a contradiction in terms as well; that we are proud to join Robert Redfield in placing ourselves squarely on the side of mankind, unashamed to wish mankind well, and that we will not sell our souls for money or professional advantage to the anti-human forces in society. It is not merely alarmist to take seriously the reminder that "if today we concern ourselves exclusively with the technical proficiency of our students and reject all responsibility for their moral sense, or lack of it, then we may someday be compelled to accept responsibility for having trained a generation willing to serve in a future Auschwitz." Unfortunately, that day appears to be much closer now—if indeed it has not already arrived—than it was in 1961 when Alvin Gouldner spoke those words before the Society for the Study of Social Problems.

## IX

Let me turn finally to the title of this address. I asked, "Is Anthropology Alive?" I had in mind a scene in a Marx brothers film wherein Groucho, fearing for the life of a prostrate and inert Harpo, gropes for the pulse, consults his watch, and reports: "Either he's dead or my watch has stopped." I was reminded of this incident because of the standards by which some of our colleagues judge work in the discipline as either vital or moribund.

I do not think anthropology is dead; I think the standards by which many of our colleagues *judge* it are dead. And they may bury it after applying those faulty standards, and thereby kill it for sure. I think the vitality of the discipline is to be judged not by the stopped clock of



value freedom, but by the vital measure of what it says about people—how, why and with what effect people do what they do. This requires an anthropological version of the sociological imagination so brilliantly described by Mills, which entails a recognition of the relationship between the events—including the troubles—in the lives of people and the social, cultural and historical circumstances in which they occur. The vitality of anthropology is in doubt only when it is humanly irrelevant or is judged by the dead measure of value freedom.

To change the attribution of the title of this address, I turn to the well-publicized graffito: "Is God dead?" and the reply, "No, he just doesn't want to get involved." I think that anthropology isn't dead; it is just that many of its more nostalgic practitioners do not want to get involved. If they were to succeed, it might in fact be dead. But since their science is man, and since what they want to avoid involvement in is the affairs of men, their desire is hopeless of achievement. They are involved whether they wish it or not. The question is not "shall I get involved," but "how can I be involved responsibly—in a way consistent with humanity as I understand it?"

Chomsky closes his article by referring to a series of articles published twenty years ago by Dwight Macdonald on the same topic as his own—the responsibility of intellectuals. He says: "Macdonald quotes an interview with a [German] death-camp paymaster who burst into tears when told that the Russians would hang him. 'Why should they? What have I done?' he asked. Macdonald concludes: 'Only those who are willing to resist authority themselves when it conflicts too intolerably with their personal moral code, only they have the right to condemn the death-camp paymaster.' The question 'What have I done?' is one that we may well ask ourselves, as we read each day of fresh atrocities in Vietnam—as we create or mouth or tolerate the deceptions that will be used to justify the *next* defense of freedom." It is worth thinking at this time of the grounds for prosecution and the rules for determining guilt and punishment at Nuremberg.

I believe that we should think of these things as we teach, as we assign grades upon which our male students' lives may well depend, as we undertake consultations to provide information or interpretations for agencies of the government or private beneficiaries of the war, as we accept monies from those sources—even as every man must when he pays his taxes or registers for the draft. In the context of genocide in Vietnam and the possibility of spying via our students and our colleagues, I would suggest that we think twice when we are asked to provide services which support the war or which commit ourselves, our knowledge or our students to the war, even if only indirectly.

Each of us, in these circumstances, will choose to act differently, but I think the crucial thing is that we act as human beings and as social

scientists according to our consciences and our knowledge—for the two are inseparable—and that we not be scared off by the myth of value-freedom. Our acts can have direct effect and can serve as examples to others. If we do not act, if we do not get involved, our science will die as it did in Germany in the 1930's and 1940's, and with it truth, reason, humanity and ultimately ourselves.

James Agee's commentary on the implications of the atomic bomb written at the time of the surrender of Japan in World War II, has new and timely relevance in the present. He said, "Man's fate has forever been shaped between the hands of reason and spirit, now in collaboration, again in conflict. Now reason and spirit meet on final ground. If either or anything is to survive, they must find a way to create an indissoluble partnership."

To shrink from value, from passion or commitment is as inappropriate as to shrink from reason. We are finding, I think, that passion is not incompatible with reason, that, in fact, reason today goes hand-in-hand with passion and both with courage. It is not the spokesmen for our current national policies—President Johnson, Secretary Rusk, General Westmoreland and "establishment intellectuals" in government such as Rostow—who are impassioned, just as it is not they who are reasonable; it is the dissenters from that policy, such as Senators Morse and Fulbright and many intellectuals outside of politics including Chomsky and Franz Schurmann who are reasoned *and* passionate. True, it is the former who are powerful and the latter who are not. But power is not truth nor, as history shows, is power even durable, while reason is. Future history, if there is one, will bear out the reasonable men of our country and of our world today, if only to bitterly regret their lack of power. It is our duty as scientists to be among those reasonable men. These things I hope we can understand and communicate to our students and whatever other audiences we may reach.

I am aware that this is an unconventional anthropological discussion. It comprises unconventional anthropology. But these are unconventional times; we are all involved in unconventional and portentous military and political events in this country, perhaps more directly than many of us have realized until recently. It is time that we accepted some unconventional responsibility for our acts, be they acts of commission or omission.

## 51 *Anthropology* as a Career



William C. Sturtevant

WHEN THE WORLD WAS MUCH YOUNGER AND THE EDITOR ANNOUNCED TO HIS family that he was going to be an anthropologist, the family replied that this was quite interesting but how did I intend to make a living? Things have changed and now anthropology is recognized as a career with all sorts of opportunities for teaching and research positions. Those whose interest has been piqued sufficiently to think of a possible future for themselves in this discipline should find our final selection rewarding. Before the reward is collected, however, those readers who have encountered this book in undergraduate study may want to consider possibilities of graduate training. To this end the editor has replaced Dr. Sturtevant's list of schools offering undergraduate anthropology with a more relevant list, for our purposes, of universities offering advanced degrees in anthropology.

### 1. *Training*

Professional anthropologists usually need an advanced degree. They must obtain the bachelor's degree after four years of college, and then the

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The author (b. 1926) is Staff Ethnologist, Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution. An expert on the Seminole Indians, his interests focus on the Southeastern Indians and the Iroquois but extend to more general theoretical problems as well. He has published extensively on his Indian researches in various scholarly journals.

master's or doctor's degree after several years of graduate work. A master's degree is received after one or usually two or more years of graduate work. The doctorate, which is normally necessary for the better positions, usually requires at least four years' work beyond the bachelor's degree.

It is possible to acquire all one's anthropological training in graduate work, after undergraduate study with a major in an entirely unrelated field. However, the student who determines his objective early can get valuable training and experience while he is in college and even earlier.

The international languages of science are English, French, German, and, increasingly, also Russian. Important advances in knowledge may be made known in any of these languages. For this reason, a reading knowledge of two foreign languages is usually required for the doctor's (Ph.D.) degree; normally these are French and German, but Russian promises to be more and more acceptable instead of one of these. A linguist seeking a Ph.D. in a department of linguistics, rather than in a department of anthropology, may need Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit as well as French and German. Depending on their areal specialties, anthropologists must often use other languages in addition to French and German. Field-work may require speaking knowledge of another language, and even if this is not the case, important published sources are often in other languages. For these reasons, knowledge of Spanish is necessary for work in Latin America and is helpful in the study of United States Indians, particularly those of the West, Southwest, and Southeast; Portuguese is necessary for work in Brazil and parts of Africa; Dutch and Indonesian are required for study of the peoples of Indonesia; Danish is an advantage in Eskimo studies, etc. Knowledge of languages is thus very important for an anthropologist, and the student can save time and effort by beginning their study as early as possible.

The basic groundwork for formal anthropological training can be laid in the college preparatory course in high school. In addition to languages, the high-school student should take English composition, since a large proportion of the anthropologist's research time is spent in writing reports on the results of his studies. Mathematics, at least through algebra, should be taken as the basis for later training in statistics. Courses in geography and history will prove beneficial. Some competence in typing, photography, sketching, and simple surveying is advantageous and can be gained at this stage in the student's education.

The use which the high-school student makes of his spare time and vacations can be equally as important as his formal studies—provided, of course, that he does well enough in school to meet requirements for college entrance. Many of the Boy Scout merit-badge subjects are examples: camping, cooking, Indian lore, first aid, photography, surveying, botany, zoology, bird study, geology, astronomy, basketry, pottery, and

textiles. Many of the Girl Scout activities and programs are also appropriate. Experience in camping will be found particularly useful.

Many areas have local amateur archeological societies which engage in excavations and have regular meetings. Participation in these activities is valuable for any prospective anthropologist, regardless of his principal interest within the field. If there is a museum nearby which has anthropological collections, the student will find repeated visits interesting and useful. Museums often accept volunteer help by high-school students. This type of work is very good training, as many anthropologists find museum experience valuable, and the young student may get an opportunity to handle specimens and to get informal training and advice from practicing anthropologists.

If there is a nearby Indian reservation or community, frequent visits by the young student will give both interesting and valuable experience. He can get to know Indians as people and also become familiar with conditions of life in an Indian community. Reading the published literature on the tribe and examining local collections of their artifacts will give background for talks with Indian acquaintances. The student should learn to keep notes on his findings and investigations.

In college, an undergraduate major in anthropology is often advantageous, but not absolutely necessary. Almost all State universities, and many other colleges, offer some undergraduate instruction in anthropology. A choice among several possible colleges may be made in several ways. A trip to the nearest university or large museum to talk with a professional anthropologist about one's special interest and problems is a good idea. The student can get some idea of the adequacy of the undergraduate anthropology training in the college being considered by inquiring about its graduate program: most colleges that offer a master's degree or doctorate in anthropology also have good undergraduate programs.

If the college selected has an undergraduate major program in anthropology, the student should consult the adviser for the anthropology department when he enters into his freshman year, even if the regulations do not require this. Ordinarily a student must spend a year or two on general studies before formal enrollment in a major subject; the anthropology adviser can help in planning the program during this period to give the best foundation for the future major.

In the college program, the nonanthropology courses taken (and the major, if the college lacks an anthropology department) will partly depend on the student's interest within anthropology. Languages, especially French and German, should be taken by any student who expects to continue in anthropology. For physical anthropology, courses in general zoology, genetics, embryology, comparative anatomy, physiology, ecology, vertebrate paleontology, and biological statistics should be included

if possible. For archeology, courses in such fields as geology, history, the history of art, elementary surveying, paleontology, statistics, zoology, comparative anatomy, and climatology will be useful. For ethnology, courses in sociology, linguistics, psychology, economics, history, general zoology, botany, statistics, geography, art, and musicology are advantageous. For linguistics, as many languages as possible, psychology, history, mathematics, and logic may be mentioned. A course or two in English composition will not be wasted, regardless of the future specialization.

Several universities have summer field schools, where training in archeology is given by participation in excavations under expert supervision. Many anthropologists have gotten useful training by attending such summer sessions, at their own or another university, while they were undergraduate students.

It is sometimes an advantage to take a few undergraduate courses in anthropology but to have an undergraduate major in one of the subjects related to anthropology, waiting until graduate work before concentrating in the field. There is often considerable duplication between undergraduate and graduate anthropology courses; the increase in interdisciplinary studies also makes such collateral training profitable. On the other hand, anthropology is an excellent major for the student who wants a liberal arts education ending in a bachelor's (B.A.) degree, and people with such training have made valuable contributions by pursuing anthropological research as a spare-time activity in later years. A few applied anthropology jobs are open to those with only a B.A., with a major in anthropology.

It is almost always advisable to change to another university after completing undergraduate work, since different teachers will increase the range of the student's knowledge. Choice of a graduate school is very important, for one's future job depends on the training received there and on the standing of the faculty in the school chosen. If the college attended for undergraduate work lacks an anthropology department, it is worth traveling to the nearest university that has such a department in order to get advice sometime during the senior year. An effort should be made to find someone in one's own special field of interest to discuss the problem with. Faculties change, and it is important to get up-to-date information.

Graduate training in anthropology takes longer than that in many other fields, since the student is usually required to spend a year or more doing fieldwork, after his first year or two of classwork. The thesis for the doctoral degree is then written on the investigations conducted during this fieldwork. Very few students receive a Ph.D. after only three years of graduate work; many take four, five, or more years.

There are some 1,500 to 2,000 professional anthropologists in the

United States today; most of them teach in universities. There are a few teaching in junior colleges, and a very few in private secondary schools. Large universities often have separate departments of anthropology whose faculties teach only anthropology. However, many universities combine sociology and anthropology in a single department; anthropologists in these schools, and some who hold positions in departments of sociology, may teach some sociology courses as well as anthropology courses. For this reason, some training in sociology is often advantageous in gaining a university teaching position.

The other major field of employment for anthropologists is in museums. Most large museums and some smaller ones have anthropological collections and hire trained anthropologists as curators of these materials. Many such museums, however, are connected with universities, and their curatorial staffs usually also hold teaching appointments in the university department of anthropology, devoting part time to museum duties and part time to teaching. Most museum anthropologists are archeologists, who usually find museum collections more necessary to their research than do ethnologists. In recent years there has been a shortage of ethnologists with museum training and experience to fill curatorial positions in ethnology. The student of ethnology who is interested in artifacts will thus find it advantageous to gain museum experience during his schooling and should try to select for his graduate work a university having an associated museum with anthropological holdings.

There are a few other types of positions open to anthropologists. There are one or two hundred such jobs in the following U.S. Government agencies: Smithsonian Institution; National Park Service; Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands; Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; Department of Justice; Department of State; Department of Defense; Library of Congress; Government of American Samoa; National Science Foundation; Veterans Administration; Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture; Bureau of the Census; Immigration Service; and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Other organizations that have hired a few anthropologists include some independent research organizations; a few philanthropic foundations; some hospitals, particularly mental hospitals; state and local health departments; the United Nations (especially UNESCO); some industrial and advertising companies; a few businesses with interests abroad; and law firms working on Indian claims cases. These jobs, however, are not numerous. Television, radio, documentary movies, and related concerns are sources of at least part-time employment for a few trained anthropologists.

An anthropologist almost always obtains his first job through the university department in which he receives his advanced degree. News of job openings is received by the university faculties, and they consider

it an obligation to place their students in their first positions. Subsequent jobs are received as the professional's reputation in his field becomes known, particularly through his publications.

The financial rewards for anthropologists are not great, considering the time and cost of the training involved. Annual salaries range from about \$9,000 to \$10,000 for a new Ph.D. to about \$30,000 for a few who have been in the field for many years. Fieldwork is not usually financed from such salaries but is paid for by the institution employing the anthropologist, or by grants of funds by philanthropic and scientific foundations. No one should go into anthropology in the expectation of large economic rewards. The rewards are of another nature: job security is relatively great, and the researcher gets his major satisfaction from earning his living at what he most enjoys doing.

## 2. *Universities*

Any selected list of universities offering training in anthropology rapidly gets out of date, since expansion of departments and of their topical coverage is continuous, and since the special opportunities at well-established departments change as older faculty members retire and are replaced by young men with different interests, or as a faculty member moves to a different university to accept a job at a higher rank. The prospective student should therefore write to several universities for the latest catalogs and compare their course offerings.

The following universities offer graduate programs in anthropology leading to an advanced degree. Those marked with an asterisk offer only the Master's degree at the time this is written (March, 1968), although some so marked offer doctorates which combine anthropology with another subject. The list is based on the American Anthropological Association's *Guide to Graduate Departments of Anthropology for the Year 1967-68*.

- University of Alabama\*
- University of Alberta
- American University\*
- University of Americas\* (Mexico City)
- University of Arizona
- Arizona State University\*
- University of Arkansas\*
- Ball State University\*
- Boston University
- Brandeis University
- University of British Columbia
- Brown University
- Bryn Mawr College
- University of Calgary



University of California, Berkeley  
 University of California, Davis  
 University of California, Los Angeles  
 University of California, Riverside  
 University of California, Santa Barbara  
 California State College at Los Angeles\*  
 Catholic University of America  
 University of Chicago  
 University of Cincinnati\*  
 City University of New York  
 University of Colorado  
 Columbia University  
 University of Connecticut\*  
 Cornell University  
 Denver University\*  
 Duke University  
 Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia\* (Mexico City)  
 University of Florida\*  
 Florida State University  
 George Washington University\*  
 University of Georgia\*  
 Hartford Seminary Foundation  
 Harvard University  
 University of Hawaii  
 University of Illinois  
 Indiana University  
 University of Iowa\*  
 University of Kansas  
 University of Kentucky  
 Université Laval (Quebec)  
 Long Island University\*  
 Louisiana State University\*  
 University of Manitoba\*  
 University of Massachusetts\*  
 McGill University (Montreal)  
 McMaster University\* (Hamilton, Ontario)  
 Miami University\* (Ohio)  
 University of Michigan  
 Michigan State University  
 University of Minnesota  
 University of Missouri  
 University of Montana\*  
 Université de Montréal  
 University of Nebraska\*  
 University of New Mexico  
 New School for Social Research\*  
 New York University  
 State University of New York at Binghamton (Harpur College)

State University of New York at Buffalo  
 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
 Northeastern University\*  
 Northwestern University  
 Northern Illinois University\*  
 Ohio State University  
 University of Oklahoma\*  
 University of Oregon  
 University of Pennsylvania  
 Pennsylvania State University  
 University of Pittsburgh  
 Princeton University  
 Rice University\*  
 University of Rochester  
 Sacramento State College\*  
 Saint Louis University\*  
 San Diego State College\*  
 San Francisco State College\*  
 Simon Fraser University (Barnaby, B.C.)  
 University of Southern California\*  
 Southern Illinois University  
 Southern Methodist University  
 Stanford University  
 Syracuse University  
 Temple University\*  
 University of Texas  
 University of Toronto  
 Tulane University  
 University of Utah  
 University of Virginia\*  
 Wake Forest College\*  
 University of Washington  
 Washington State University  
 Washington University (St. Louis)  
 Wayne State University  
 Western Michigan University\*  
 Wichita State University\*  
 University of Wisconsin  
 University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee  
 Yale University

## Correlation of This Book with Representative Texts

BEALS, RALPH L. AND HARRY HOIJER, *An Introduction to Anthropology*, 3rd ed., Macmillan, 1965

Chapter Nos.	Related selections in <i>Readings in Anthropology</i> , 2d ed.	Chapter Nos.	Related selections in <i>Readings in Anthropology</i> , 2d ed.
1	I:1-3	15	II:17, 21, 23-25
2	I:6-10, 20; II:16	16	II:18
3	I:9, 34; II:2-4	17	II:26-28
4	I:9, 11, 12-14	18	II:37-41
5	I:4, 5, 22	19	I:23-29
6-8	I:15-19, 21	20	II:42-46
9	II:1, 5-9	21	II:47-49
10-13	I:34, 38, 41; II:10	22-23	II:29-36, 50
14	II:13, 15		

HOEBEL, E. ADAMSON, *Anthropology, The Study of Man*, 3rd ed., McGraw-Hill, 1966

Chapter Nos.	Related selections in <i>Readings in Anthropology</i> , 2d ed.	Chapter Nos.	Related selections in <i>Readings in Anthropology</i> , 2d ed.
1	I:1-3	19	II:42-46
2	II:1	20	II:22
3	I:23-28	21	II:47-49
4	II:47-49	22-23	II:17-18
5	II:3, 4	24	II:23-25
6	I:29-43	25	II:19-21
7	I:6	26	. .
8	I:9	27	II:28
9	I:10-11	28-29	II:11, 13-15
10	I:12, 24, 33-34	30	II:27
11	I:13, 14, 35, 36	31	II:12, 26
12	I:37-42	32-34	II:37-41
13-14	I:15-19	35	II:5-9, 34, 36, 50
15-18	. .	36	II:35

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Chapter Nos.	Related selections in <i>Readings in Anthropology</i> , 2d ed.	Chapter Nos.	Related selections in <i>Readings in Anthropology</i> , 2d ed.
1	I: 1-3	18	I: 39-41
2-3	I: 4-7	19	I: 43
4	I: 9	20	II: 1-7
5	I: 10, 20	21-22	II: 10-15
6	I: 11-13	23	II: 17-21
7	I: 15-19	24	II: 22-28
8	I: 21	25	II: 47-49
9	I: 22, 24	26-27	II: 37-41
10	I: 30-32	28	I: 23, 25, 28, 29
11-12	I: 33-34	29	II: 42-46
13-14	I: 37-38	30	II: 8-9
15-16	I: 42	31	II: 29-35
17	I: 35-36	32	II: 36, 50

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1	I: 1-3	12	I: 15-19
2	II: 47-49	13	II: 10
3	II: 1, 23-29, 42-46	14-15	II: 11, 13-15
4	II: 19-20	16	II: 26
5-8	II: 17-18	17	II: 27
9	II: 23-25	18-20	II: 37-41
10	II: 21, 22	21	I: 43; II: 34, 36
11	II: 28	22	II: 35, 50

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1	I: 1	8	II: 16-18
2	I: 3; II: 1	9-10	II: 26-28
3	I: 2; II: 10, 36	11	II: 13-15
4	II: 2, 3, 4	12-13	II: 37-41
5	I: 23, 28; II: 5-7	14	II: 30, 31, 34, 35
6	II: 8, 9	15	II: 50
7	II: 19-21, 24, 25		

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Chapter Nos.	Related selections in <i>Readings in Anthropology</i> , 2d ed.	Chapter Nos.	Related selections in <i>Readings in Anthropology</i> , 2d ed.
1	I: 1	10	II: 17-21
2	I: 2	11	II: 26-28
3	I: 3	12	II: 37-41
4	I: 4	13	II: 42-47
5	I: 23-29; II: 1-4	14	II: 34, 36
6		15	II: 47-49
7	II: 32	16	II: 5-9, 50
8	I: 34	17	II: 35
9	II: 13-15		

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1	I: 1-3; II: 1-4	6	II: 10-15
2	I: 4-14, 20, 21	7	II: 16-28
3	I: 30-43	8	II: 37-41
4	I: 15-20, 22	9	II: 50
5	I: 23-29; II: 5-9, 29, 34-36		



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